The Daily Dish

The Reality of Mass Deportation

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN | NOVEMBER 8, 2024

CNN is reporting: "Donald Trump's allies and some in the private sector have been quietly preparing to detain and deport migrants residing in the United States on a large scale, according to four sources familiar with the discussions." The notion of deporting all illegal immigrants was featured in many of the president-elect's rallies and remarks, but that was also true when he ran for office in 2016.

At that time, AAF took a look at the budgetary and economic consequences of pursuing such a policy and concluded:

> *The federal government would have to spend roughly $400 billion to $600 billion to address the 11.2 million undocumented immigrants and prevent future unlawful entry into the United States. In order to remove all undocumented immigrants, each immigrant would have to be apprehended, detained, legally processed, and transported to his or her home country. In turn, this would shrink the labor force by 11 million workers and reduce real GDP by $1.6 trillion.*

Oh, and by the way, it would take roughly 20 years. So, the promise of deportation is an extremely expensive one in terms of the budget required and the economic fallout. It would also rend the social fabric of America as it would be necessary to do house and business searches to find those who should be deported. For any and all of these reasons, the actual policy was not pursued during the previous Trump Administration.

Now? Now, all of the costs have gotten larger. And this time around, Mr. Trump was elected with a majority of the popular vote, making the social upheaval even more politically costly. It seems unlikely that the full-scale deportation will be seriously contemplated.