



The Daily Dish

## August 20th Edition

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN | AUGUST 20, 2014

Congressman Paul Ryan is [shifting the debate](#) on regulations. Within his ‘Expanding Opportunity in America’ initiative, the congressman argues that it is the poor who are hit the worst from the record regulatory burdens coming from Washington. He points to “regressive” regulations that raise the price of consumer goods. [AAF’s research](#) has found regulations can raise costs of everything from vehicles to food. The administration has had no problem [issuing regulations](#) at a reckless pace, issuing \$123.7 billion in regulatory costs this year alone.

The Department of Veterans’ Affairs is still [having issues](#) delivering treatment to the nation’s servicepersons. A new report by the VA inspector general found hospitals are still cancelling appointments in an attempt to reach backlog goals. The report found one hospital with 1,500 cancellations made in one day. Six hundred of those veterans never received the care prescribed.

### *Eakinomics: Immigration Reform Done Wrong*

I am in Washington, DC so nothing is going on. It is August, so less than nothing is going on. (Proof? I watched reruns of a hearing on extraterrestrial life on CSPAN2 yesterday.) The one, single thing that has happened is that the president held meetings on administrative options for immigration reform with advocates and the business community.

The U.S. desperately needs immigration reform. It needs to take advantage of the economic growth [opportunity](#). It needs more secure borders, a way to improve law enforcement, an employment verification system, and a humane resolution to the future of those here illegally. The right way to do these reforms is to change the laws of the United States, and do so in a bipartisan manner so that all points of view are represented in the debate and a politically-durable solution is achieved.

It is not clear just how much that the president could instead achieve by executive action. He might be able to re-task unused employment-based green cards to new applicants and thus expand the effective supply. There is a smaller chance he could legally change the effective cap for employment-based green cards by not counting dependents of green card holders toward the total. And he certainly could extend the scope of his Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy to apply to relatives of the so-called Dreamers as well as the childhood arrivals themselves.

This would be the wrong way to do immigration reform.

It would be wrong from a policy perspective because those changes would last as little as two years. How much of the uncertainty of a Dreamer’s family is removed by putting off the threat of deportation until the next president? How much business improvement will come from a temporary policy? Stimulus was a crashing disappointment because of its temporary, targeted nature. A similar fate awaits “immigration stimulus.”

It would be even worse politically. It would be partisan, non-legislative, and partial in its scope. Worse, it would practically guarantee that we would not see bipartisan legislation that solves all the dimensions of the problem in this presidency. The only problem it would solve is evidently the presidents' political one.