

Human population growth, not immigration, promotes global warming

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In a recent soapbox, Phil Cafaro once again conflates immigration with global population growth. He falsely suggests that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) identifies immigration as a driver of global warming and claims that the immigration reform bill recently approved by the U.S. Senate would exacerbate global climate change.

In its most recent Synthesis Report (available at www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/syr/en/contents.html), the IPCC does identify global population growth as a key driver of the greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming. Cafaro seems ignorant of the fact, however, that global population growth results from human reproduction, not from immigration. Immigration is simply the transfer of people from one country to another.

The only references to immigration (migration) in the IPCC's Fourth Synthesis Report relate to the likelihood that the sea level rise, increased cyclone activity, and droughts associated with global climate change will result in migration away from the affected areas. Cafaro's misrepresentation of the IPCC's position is shocking, given that he is a professor at CSU.

It is urgent that we promote policies to reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions, as well as humane policies to reduce the human population gradually in order to combat global climate change. Claiming that immigration causes global climate change, on the other hand, is nothing more than scapegoating, i.e. blaming a vulnerable group for problems for which it bears no special responsibility. Doing so distracts us from the real issues, and should be firmly rejected by all people of good will.

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