

Victor Davis Hanson: We Need to Stop Letting in Ungrateful Immigrants

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Editor's note: This is a lightly edited transcript of today's video from Daily Signal senior contributor Victor Davis Hanson.

Hello, this is Victor Davis Hanson for the Daily Signal.

All Americans support legal immigration, especially legal immigration that is diverse, as I said, measured in numbers that can be assimilated and acculturated and integrated, meritocratic, so we get people who come here with skills that ensure that we, the people of the United States, will not have to support them, and they have some knowledge of the traditions and customs and protocol of the United States, as well as English fluency.

But from time to time, that hasn't happened. And when you have that combined with illegal immigration, as we did under the Biden administration, when 12 million people came in, sometimes at rates of 10,000 a day, plus over a million and a half legal immigrants, then you have a pool of 30 million illegal and legal immigrants and 53 million people who were not born in the United States.

So then people lose their support for immigration.

It happened in the early 20th century, say from about 1900 to 1910. About 1.5% of the population, 1 million people, half a million some years, but some years a whole million, came into the United States from Southern and Eastern Europe. And they had very different ideas about politics.

Many of them were anarchists. They joined unions, and an anarchist, we remember, had killed William McKinley. He was an American-born anarchist, but there was a lot of worry that immigration at that level of 1.5% of the population every year from people who were not integrating but had radical ideas about changing America was dangerous, and it lost public support for years.

The same thing is happening, as I said now, because of the numbers, but also because we're seeing a new type of immigrant.

Usually, we say the immigrant is good for America because he's eager to get here. He's eager to work hard. He loves the United States. He's studied the United States. He wants to leave his homeland and start anew, and then he makes us say, "Wow, look at that energized immigrant that loves this country. We've got to snap out of it and compete."

That was the idea of immigration, one of the ideas.

Not now.

We're getting a lot of immigrants that are coming from failed states, mostly as a result of communism and socialism. Some of them come legally, some come illegally, and they're coming in numbers that we can't fully assimilate.

But there's a new type of legal immigrant, and these are immigrants from the first generation or their children in a second generation from failed states.

And so, let me ask you a question. What do Rashida Tlaib, a Democrat of Michigan, or Ilhan Omar, a Democratic representative from Minnesota whose family came from Somalia, Rashida Tlaib was from the West Bank, or [Alexander Ocasio-Cortez], whose father came from Puerto Rico, who was also a Democratic congresswoman, or the podcaster Hasan Piker, who's from a multimillion-dollar family in Turkey and was born here and then returned to Turkey, or New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani, who came here from Uganda, or Democratic Senate candidate Abdul El-Sayed, who came from Egypt, his family did, or Melat Kiros, whose family and she came from Ethiopia, or Rep. Ro Khanna, a representative congressman from California whose family and his wife's family came from India, second generation, or Gustavo Gordillo, who is a first-generation immigrant from Peru—and I could go on, but that should be enough.

What do they all have in common? Let's count them.

No. 1, most of them are pretty wealthy. Ro Khanna's family is probably worth a quarter of a billion dollars. Hasan Piker drives a Porsche. He has a multimillion-

dollar home. His family is worth millions. Ilhan Omar, whether truthfully or untruthfully, filed a financial report that said she was worth \$30 million. We can talk about Mr. El-Sayed. He filed a tax return for over \$600,000.

But besides that, they are mostly wealthy, they're also, with exception of AOC, Muslims, which is fine, except they accentuate their Islamic identity to the extent that Mr. El-Sayed has even said in an unguarded moment that he didn't want to mention anything about the killing of the Supreme Leader, the theocratic enemy of the United States in Iran, because that might upset his constituents.

But in addition to being quite wealthy and Islamic and from failed states, many of them, as soon as they arrived here or their parents, equated their own race or their religion or their antithesis to what they call the oppressor or victimizer class, the white male heterosexual Christian we all know who's supposed to be responsible for all the sins of the world, as somehow exploiting them.

In other words, think of the argument. You come from a failed socialist state in Somalia or Uganda or Egypt. You set one foot in here or your parents set one foot in here, and immediately you lodge complaints against the gracious host that welcomed you in and welcomed you in with security, prosperity, and freedom that you did not have under the system that you left, but which you seem to now champion in a very chauvinistic way.

And no sooner than you come without any knowledge of the United States' nature or history or protocols, you're so bold that you start to demand [socialist changes](#).

You want to abolish the Senate. You want reparations. You want to reopen the border. You want to get rid of the filibuster. You want to get rid of the Electoral College. You want to pack the court. You want to change the capitalist system. You want to tax billionaires not on what they make, but on their worth. You want to go after people who have two homes.

All these are radical things that are outside the American tradition.

And what people are just stunned by is they thought that under the old immigrant paradigm that you come from your home country and you vote with your feet.

In other words, you're saying, "I want to be a new American. I want to take advantage of this system that attracted me there and gave me a home where I had no home."

But not now.

Now is, "I'm very wealthy and I like to come to America and I'd like to experiment, on Americans and impose a foreign socialist system that they have never wanted, and I want to run for office. I want to be a podcast influencer. I want to use my wealth and influence to change the country that I fled to and kind of emulate the system that I fled from."

Why are people doing this? Why, we have to ask ourselves, why would you, why would you leave the country that has failed you and go to a country that welcomed you and then be so ungracious?

I think the primary reason is immigrants from these areas put their finger in the air and they say, "Where do the winds of advantages blow?"

Not where the right and conservative that says, "We welcome you, but we're an entrepreneurial capitalist system, and we want you to take care of yourselves, so go to it, and we'll give you the advice and the infrastructure so you can be successful."

Versus, "You are a victim. You're a non-white victim. You've been oppressed. There are affirmative action opportunities for you, both in college admissions and scholarships, race-based scholarships. There is preference in hiring. You can lodge complaints and complain that if you're not doing well, the entire system is against you and innately prejudiced. We have a whole array, we on the Democratic leftist side, of subsidies for housing, food, legal advice, education, and all we ask of you is to retain your own ethnic, religious, foreign identities, or at least make them as important or more important than your American identity, which is going to be incidental, and therefore show us fealty and loyalty at the polls. Do that, and we will take care of you."

And unfortunately, what is the most ironic of all is a lot of these new immigrants who are very affluent are imposing a socialist system, they think, on Americans as if we're the lab rats and they are the experimenters, and that's not a very successful

way to win the American people over to the cherished idea in the past of legal immigration.