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Dear Editor,

With all the headlines about fake news, alternate facts, and charges of treason swirling in every direction, this is arguably the worst our nation has been so divided since that Civil War. As was the case in 1860, respective positions of the Left and Right have become incomprehensible to the respective antagonists. Both sides are terrified of the direction of the country, demonize the integrity of their opponents, and are in their own minds deeply patriotic.

And the match that has ignited this uncivil war is immigration.

I have always thought Lincoln's effort to bring his nation together in his Second Inaugural was a bit feckless. By reminding us that both North and South believed in the same God and read the same Bible, he was reminding us that we have more in common than divide us. This was not a little ironic as both sides had spent decades citing chapter and verse of the Bible to support their opposing positions on slavery.

This solipsistic game can easily be played again today regarding immigration. If one is liberal and focused on compassion and American values, one would gesture towards the sentiments of Genesis and ask "Am I not my brother's keeper?". But if I am a Trump supporter and concerned with terrorism and job security, I look to Ezekiel and proclaim, "If the watchman sees the sword coming and fails to blow the trumpet.... blood shall be on his hands".

But the issues undergirding immigration should be neither theological, philosophical, or really even be political. They are purely practical, and based on undeniable mathematical facts regarding the obvious linkage between changing the American demographic, and a desperately needed immigration work force. This reality became abundantly clear to me in Syracuse during the past month. Because Central New York, like communities all over the country, is ground zero for the immigration crisis.

I am an owner of Peregrine Health Care Company, which cares for frail seniors still living in their homes. We are a small provider and margins are thin. Our biggest barrier to growth is that we are often unable to hire and train Americans who are willing to provide these types of services. They often prefer to work at less demanding jobs such as fast food restaurants or

sales clerks for comparable wages. We literally have to turn away potential clients because we don't have enough staff.

About a month before Trump's travel ban in February, we reached out to Interfaith Works and their Center for New American resettlement program for refugees from around the world. Within two weeks we had 15 job applicants from Cuba, Congo, Iraq, and Burma sitting in my office. To my surprise there were five physicians, three nurses and other trained professional, and all desperate to work for \$12 an hour. Their biggest obstacle was passing an English and health care exam.

Interfaith Works' mission, is to help refugees establish themselves in housing, employment, and education. They focus on refugees in particular as they these people are often caught in civil wars, stranded in refugee camps for years, and have been thoroughly vetted for any terrorist inclinations. Last year they settled over 700 individuals in our community, and have been a boon to our local economy.

To date we have certified five of these refugees, and they were all immediately hired and are now working. We hope to hire many more as their language skills improve. Perhaps our home care agency might flourish.

But the facts about American demographics are stubborn things. Our birth rate currently is less than two babies per couple and 20% of Baby boomers will have no children, and 25% will have only one. And we are rapidly getting older. We are quickly becoming a nation of seniors with life expectancy soon to hit 80, and we have 10,000 Baby Boomers retiring every day.

Right now, the demographic pyramid regarding age is upside down in both the nation and right here in Syracuse. Today we are struggling to fill many unwanted jobs, and soon we will be desperate.

If the Trump supporters want to limit immigration, I would like to hear their ideas about who will care for our aging baby boomers, and to review their math. After all, to paraphrase both Lincoln and the Gospel of Mathew, "A house divided against its demographic self cannot....", well you know.

Respectfully Yours,



Stephen S. Bowman