

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

America is constantly changing

One of the things I like best about Pottstown is its diversity. Black, white, working people, everybody gets along.

But there are lots of Americans who are afraid of diversity, and President Trump, as usual, is selling exclusion and fear.



Commentary by
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“I am happy,” he recently crowed, “to inform all of the people living their Suburban Lifestyle Dream that you will no longer be bothered or financially hurt by having low income people living in your neighborhood.”

Trump was referring to the Fair Housing Act of 1968, which outlaws discrimination in renting and selling housing. Trump vows to repeal it.

And Trump’s trying to build physical and legal walls to keep immigrants from entering America, as well.

But demographic trends look much different than Trump’s narrow vision of racial and social exclusion.

Americans have long been schizophrenic about immigration. Until after the First World War, Pennsylvania attracted more immigrants than any other state except New York.

Philadelphians were so upset at a heavy influx of Irish Catholics in the 1830s and 1840s that riots broke out in Kensington in May 1844. Many people were killed and Catholic churches were burned. The governor escorted the state militia into the city to restore order.

After the Civil War, immigrants in-

creasingly came from southern and eastern Europe: Italy, Poland, Russia, the Baltic states, the Balkans. The “yellow peril” in California. All were assimilated in a generation.

The latest wave is Latinos. Studies show they, too, assimilate within a generation.

Immigration levels are close to what they were from the 1880s through the 1920s. Without immigrants, America’s population would be shrinking, because our rate of births is below our rate of deaths.

Our elderly population is soaring and our working age population is shrinking. Without immigrants, who’s going to pay Social Security taxes and provide nursing care?

America has always been a nation of immigrants, and the dream of all ethnic groups has been upward mobility. Nothing to fear.

U.S. Population Actual and Projected 2005 and 2050		
	2005	2050
Population	296M	438M
Foreign born	12%	19%
Non-Hispanic White	67%	47%
Latino	14%	29%
Black	13%	13%
Asian	5%	5%
Children (under 18)	25%	23%
Working (18-64)	63%	58%
Elderly 65+	12%	19%

Percent non-Hispanic white students	
Boyertown School District	95%
Pottstown School District	46%

Which district looks like the future?

