

Persistent Error in 2013 fact check of Dan Stein

Back [in 2013 PolitiFact published a fact check examining a claim by Dan Stein](#) of the Federation for American Immigration Reform. Stein said that under a proposed Senate bill the United States would see a population increase of 70 million over 10 years:

The quotation as PolitiFact presented it (bold emphasis added):

The "so-called path to citizenship amnesty program is a fraction of what the deal bills with," [said](#) Dan Stein, who heads a group that opposes the bill, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, or FAIR, on [July 7, 2013](#). "Ultimately, it unleashes a massive increase in overall immigration Essentially, it gives up on the American worker by simply suggesting that at every level of the labor market employers should be able to bring in foreign workers. **We're talking about a population increase under the Senate bill of over 70 million people in 20 years -- 70 million people.**"

PolitiFact performed its fact check based on interpreting Stein to say that the population would increase by 70 million on top of the existing baseline for population increase. Stein did not say that, but that interpretation comes through clearly in PolitiFact's headline/deck and elsewhere:



The image shows a screenshot of a PolitiFact article. On the left is a small portrait of Dan Stein. To his right is a quote in bold black text: "Increase in overall immigration. ... We're talking about a population increase under the Senate bill of over 70 million people in 20 years." Below the quote is a caption: "Dan Stein on Sunday, July 7th, 2013 in an interview on CBS' 'Face the Nation'". At the bottom of the snippet is a headline in bold black text: "Dan Stein says Senate immigration bill would add 70 million Americans over 20 years".

Is the population increase under a Senate bill the same as the Senate bill's discrete impact on the projected population increase? PolitiFact's interpretation changes Stein's statement from a literally true ambiguity to a clear-as-a-bell falsehood. Is fact-checking supposed to work like that?

In 2013 I pointed PolitiFact toward a black-and-white error in its reporting for the Stein fact check.

PolitiFact wrote (bold emphasis added):

While credible estimates do say the U.S. population could grow by 65 million between 2013 and 2033, only about 16 million of that would be increases resulting from the Senate bill. **The remaining 49 million, or three-quarters of the total, would come from natural population growth among people already in America and by immigration that's deemed legal under today's laws** -- and thus would have nothing to do with whether the Senate bill passes or not.

The part highlighted in bold says that the CBO projections do not count illegal immigrants. CBO, however, does count illegal immigration as the following quotation [from CBO's Senate bill markup](#) shows clearly:

CBO estimates that, under the bill, the net annual flow of unauthorized residents would decrease by about 25 percent relative to what would occur under current law, resulting in a reduction in the U.S. population (including a reduction in the number of children born in the United States) relative to that benchmark of 1.6 million in 2023 and 2.5 million in 2033.

The “flow of unauthorized residents” is nothing other than illegal immigration. CBO’s report directly contradicts PolitiFact’s reporting.

[PolitiFact has let this error stand for years](#) after having it pointed out.

If PolitiFact’s “Truth-O-Meter” ratings are supposed to be something other than subjective value judgments then the “False” rating Stein received was an error.

And PolitiFact’s reporting on the CBO assessment it used to justify its ruling contains a clear error PolitiFact has declined to correct.

Sincerely,

Bryan W. White
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