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Lora Ries: Border Security and Immigration Policy

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Knight & Rose Show - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Lora Ries to discuss border security and immigration policy. They explore Biden's policy changes, like ending Remain in Mexico, resuming catch and release, and creating mass parole programs. Ries critiques refugee expansions, NGO incentives, and "welcome the stranger" misuses. She discusses unaccompanied minors. Ries recommends merit-based reforms, assimilation, and enhanced vetting, drawing lessons from Europe's crime and balkanization issues.

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Transcript

Welcome to the Knight & Rose Show, where we discuss practical ways of living out an authentic Christian worldview. I'm Wintery Knight. And I'm Desert Rose.

Welcome, Rose. So today we are delighted to welcome a guest to the show, Lora Ries. Lora Ries

is the director of the Border Security and Immigration Center at the Heritage Foundation, with nearly 30 years of experience in immigration and homeland security.

She has worked in various roles, including at the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee. She also worked in the private sector as a homeland security industry strategist and in government relations. Ries earned a law degree at Valparaiso University Law School in Indiana and a B.A. in International Economics and Cultural Affairs and Spanish from Valparaiso University.

Welcome to the Knight & Rose Show, Lora. Well, thank you for having me on. We are really looking forward to this interview.

We really appreciate your voice on the topic of immigration. So immigration was one of the most important issues in the 2024 election that brought Donald Trump back into office. Can you tell us what were some of the policy changes that were responsible for producing the results that led to so much concern and the situation we're in now? Sure.

Well, really from day one when the Joe Biden administration took over, they reversed many of the Trump administration's policies from Trump's first term and truly opened the border. And word went around the world that our border was open and people responded in numbers and masses. And so the U.S. Customs and Border Protection reported encountering over 11 million inadmissible aliens during Biden's four years.

And so an inadmissible alien can be someone who either crosses illegally between the ports of entry or comes through a port of entry without a visa and various other violations of the law. On top of that, early during the Biden administration, CBP would unofficially report to the media that there were over two million known Godaways. Those were numbers that, say, CBP maybe saw someone crossing on a video and couldn't get to them or tracked footprints, that sort of thing.

So the Biden administration stopped giving those unofficial reports with at least a year and a half left to go during the Biden administration. So we know that that number is even north of two million. So we are talking historic numbers of people who were let in during just those four years.

And if you think about pre-Biden, the estimated population of illegal aliens was typically you would hear 11 million, but that was year after year after year after year. And that number never changed, which begs the question, is that number real? Why isn't it changing? In 2019, Yale came out with a study that said, well, it's probably more like 20 million. And again, that's pre-Biden.

So if you take, let's just take the often cited 11 million pre-Biden and you add to it the Biden numbers, we're talking about potentially doubling the illegal alien population in just four years. And with that came national security concerns. Those numbers went through the roof.

Crime increased, expenses increased for communities in terms of housing, a shortage of housing, public education, emergency room visits and on and on. And so Americans said, we can't deal with these numbers. It doesn't even matter what country they're coming from.

It is the volume of people and the fentanyl that was coming across the border and poisoning so many Americans. And so people said enough is enough in November and voted for Donald Trump to return. Yeah, yeah, thanks.

It really is massive, just hard to understand. Yeah, so like it's it's not an kind of an accident, but it was a result of specific policy changes like ending remain in Mexico. You know, when you come and apply at the border, you aren't admitted.

You have to wait in Mexico and then resuming catch and release policies. So they're making specific changes in order to get to this big, big number. Right.

That's right. Yeah, they they made both of those changes remain in Mexico during Trump's first term was a game changer. Congress authorized that back in 1996, but it had never been used by a president before.

And it really halted the caravans of illegal aliens we were seeing coming in waves through Central America to the U.S. border. So it was an effective tool. And yes, Joe Biden halted that and released most of the encounters of an admissible aliens into the U.S. They also played a lot of word games.

They they painted anyone who wasn't a citizen, whether they were a green card holder, a temporary visa holder or a legal alien. They they labeled them all non-citizens for partly for a sympathetic response from the American public. But certainly blurring the lines and violating the law in many respects.

They created a lot of immigration parole programs. This is something that is in the statute of immigration parole. It used to be very rarely used.

It's supposed to be in the secretary of Homeland Security's discretion on a case by case basis for someone who has an urgent humanitarian need or their entry would be a significant public benefit. Basically, it's for someone who doesn't have time to go get a visa. And so the classic examples used to be if someone needs emergency surgery, that would be considered an urgent humanitarian need.

Or if they were going to testify in a criminal case, that would be considered a significant public benefit. And neither of those would you have time to go get a visa ahead of time? Congress never authorized work for immigration parolees. Why would you in those circumstances? If you're coming in those temporary circumstances, you're not coming for work.

And yet the Biden administration created mass parole programs largely based on nationality. And it wasn't case by case. It wasn't temporary.

Secretary Mayorkas handed out work authorization like candy. And so it was all to paint so many aliens who were coming here as quote unquote lawfully present when the administration didn't have either the constitutional or the statutory authority to be handing out these immigration benefits that way. Wow.

And I understand that the Biden administration kind of somewhat handicapped ICE as well. And it seems like the Trump administration has sort of set them free to do their job. Do you know any any more specifics about that about what happened? Yeah, also day one, the Biden administration issued a memo really limiting who ICE could investigate, arrest, detain or deport to according to the memo.

It was national security basically spies, terrorists and anyone who crossed the border illegally since Biden took office. But we know on that last element that they didn't enforce that either. And so lots of criminal categories were not an immigration priority and and other types of immigration violations.

And so and even if ICE were to pursue the so-called priorities, they had to do all kinds of additional paperwork. They had to get approval at several levels of supervision. I mean, it was basically ice.

You're not don't do your job. So truly, they were hamstrung from enforcing our laws. And so it was kind of a double whammy.

Not only did Biden open the border and millions came in, then ICE wasn't allowed to enforce our immigration laws against most of them. And so that is why now we are faced with such an uphill job for ICE now under the Trump administration to enforce the laws. Congress passed in the one big beautiful bill considerable more resources for ICE to do its job.

But we do see the left fighting ICE, particularly in some sanctuary jurisdictions and also a lot of lawfare tying up policy changes, at least at the district court level. And the Trump administration appeals it and usually ultimately wins. But it's just a game of delay.

Right. Wow. So what kind of effect does importing large numbers of low skilled immigrants and refugees have on the cost and availability of goods and services like housing schools, health care, law enforcement? Well, we are continuing to see a shortage of housing and very high prices for housing in the south side of Chicago.

For example, during the Biden administration, a lot of South Chicago residents protested and would go to city council meetings and say, look, we don't have enough housing. Why are you giving it to illegal aliens, people who aren't supposed to be here? Where are your citizens? Where are your constituents? And we are paying your salaries, yet you're giving these resources to people who aren't supposed to be here. And in terms of other resources, I mean, education, public school, crowded classrooms.

When these school districts don't know that suddenly they are going to have a large population

of student age aliens descend into their classrooms, they didn't plan for that. They didn't budget for that. They didn't hire enough teachers for that.

And so the kids who suffer, in addition to, you know, the alien students who are put into that situation, but the kids who suffer are the American citizen students and the and the lawful immigrants who now don't have the teacher's attention because, you know, they might be dealing with other students who English isn't their first language. They're not understanding the instruction, let alone the content. And so everyone in the classroom suffers.

But again, you know, who should be the priority? And this is why Americans first, America first really hits home with American citizens because they're tired of their tax dollars going to so many people who aren't supposed to be here. Yeah, one of the ones that scares me the most is the health care system. I've heard nightmare stories over the last few years of people with genuine life threatening emergencies waiting for hours at the E.R. And I've experienced myself that insurance costs going through the roof and I know that I'm paying through insurance and we all are for the visits of people who shouldn't be in this country who were not invited here, who didn't go through the process.

And actually, I used to work with refugees in Clarkston, Georgia, which is a huge refugee community. And the families there from other countries regularly as the default take their children to the E.R. for headaches, for bad breath. I'm not even kidding.

I was asked to take a kid to the E.R. because he had bad breath and his mom was very, very concerned for stuff. He knows regularly any time one of the kids got a little cold up time to take him to the E.R. And, you know, meantime, I struggle with ongoing pneumonia. And when I go to the yards because my life is in danger and it hours and hours of wait time that has got to change.

That is not OK. Right. Yeah, clearly, that was is not the intent of the E.R., but so many people use it as their primary care facility instead of of going to a doctor and practicing, you know, using wellness visits and the like and our insurance industries.

It's so distorted because of all of this and government subsidies propping all this up. I mean, the government closure the past several weeks has really exposed this and why health insurance is so expensive. But I mean, you talk to moms out there who can't get, you know, a doctor appointment for a specialty doctor if their child has special medical needs and boy, there's there's no angry or group and rightly so.

I mean, even average Americans, you try and schedule what seemed to be regular type appointments, medical appointments, and it's months out. So it truly is, you know, what what how much better would this operate? How much cheaper would it be if we were just addressing those people who are here lawfully? Yeah, definitely. And I think the same thing applies with law enforcement as well.

I've got another question here for you. How is government spending affected by large scale importation of low skilled immigrants and refugees? Other government services? Can you give me just in general at the federal, state and local level? How is the spending on social programs, et cetera, affected by bringing in so many low skilled immigrants and refugees? Well, I mean, at all government levels, the expenses increase. Milton Friedman said it best.

You can't have open borders in a welfare state. And we certainly saw that the last four years. Education largely falls on state and local backs, but, you know, health care to detention.

And so all of these costs go up by, you know, it can be billions of dollars for for states and certainly tens or hundreds of billions of dollars for the federal government. And what's what was so appalling is during the Biden administration and during the Obama administration, too, they did this. But it really they dialed it up the last four years.

The hundreds of billions of dollars that went out the door through federal grants, through multiple departments, to NGOs, non-governmental organizations that carried out this mass migration. So they helped bring people from around the world, from South America, through Central America, through Mexico, to the U.S. border and then throughout the U.S. And people have become more familiar with it. We did a study here at Heritage where we tracked a small sample of cell phones that crossed over a 30 day period between ports of entry.

So those are illegal crossings. And then for 30 days, where did those phones go? And this was a small subset. Through about 30 known NGOs, those phones went to almost every single congressional district in the country, except for like maybe two.

And so this was truly a mass operation that the Biden administration set up. And so then you see the expenses from that, whether it's housing or education, you know, all these things that we've talked about hitting local, state and federal taxpayers. Wow, it's mind blowing.

Yeah. And this eventually becomes a problem for taxpayers and the children of taxpayers who have to face inflation, interest on the debt and other financial impacts that they have to pay for. Anyway, I'll ask you a different question.

What can we learn from the experiences of other countries that have experimented with loose immigration and border security policies? Well, we look to some countries in Europe who are ahead of us on this path and they are in bad situation. If you look at the UK, if you look at France, if you look at, you know, Sweden, I think has has turned the corner, et cetera, et cetera, where they really opened their doors and just completely lost control of their borders and they're not practicing interior enforcement. And so they are experiencing a lot of crime, rapes against children.

You know, in the UK, we there's there were reports of a lot of rapes, particularly by Pakistani gangs, grooming gangs, against young children. And so we've got British people, Scottish, Irish, French asking, can we save our country? And the US is on that same path. We're not as far

down that path as those countries, but we are on that same path.

And so that's why it's really important. If you want to remain a sovereign nation, you have to have borders and you have to enforce those borders. Really, the point should be to have a lawful and orderly and a manageable immigration system each year.

And too many countries haven't been practicing that. And so you can try and get back to it. But that means you have to have very thorough immigration enforcement from your interior to undo a lot of that damage.

And that's what the US is experiencing right now. And the pushback from the left, you don't hear the left talking about the borders anymore. They are aiming all of their attention, their PR, their paid rioters, their lawfare against ICE and preventing immigration deportations.

Yeah, definitely. And that's not a crazy thing to imagine that a country would want to kind of orient their immigration laws to getting highly skilled, law abiding immigrants only. Canada did that under a previous PM, Stephen Harper, and then it was undone by subsequent regimes like in the Liberal Party who who did go with open borders.

I want to tell you guys a funny, well, it's not funny, but a scary story that I just happened to read in a Canadian national newspaper dated November 8th. And this was about a case where they had led in a Pakistani immigrant and he was driving very slow in the left lane on a major highway. And the person behind him came up behind him and started blinking lights and honking the horn to get him out of the left lane, which everybody knows is a convention in North America, right? So he slowed down and stopped his car in the left lane on a busy highway.

And there was a massive five vehicle crash that resulted in a lot of injuries and one death. And the point of me telling you this is that the judge decided that because this guy was on a permanent residency, he would only give him six months less a day in jail, which prevented him from being deported. So I just just thought that this was such a good illustration of how government sometimes is very compassionate, but they're compassionate at the expense of taxpayers and taking risks because the taxpayers lives, the taxpayers property and, you know, your family members.

But they feel that they're doing a good, a good thing. And so at the expense of all of the people they've been interested to take care of, this is a serious financial problem that harms United States citizens. It's also it's just so reversed to to think that somehow it's compassionate to bring in people without vetting, without permission, without the consent of the people, without skills, without, et cetera, without knowing their intentions at the expense of the people you've been entrusted to care for.

That would be like me just taking the front door off my house and advertising on TV that the door is open, that no one's going to be kicked out and having my three little children in their

beds vulnerable to anything and anyone. That makes no sense whatsoever. I'm entrusted to care first for my family, then for my community and then go out from there.

It's just this issue really upsets me. I want to ask you about kind of from a biblical perspective, because I interact with a lot of Christians. I'm in Christian ministry full time and I hear from a lot of Christians in particular aren't Christians commanded to welcome the stranger.

And by this, they mean have open borders, basically. So how would you respond to that? Well, the U.S. has historically been the most generous country on the planet in terms of welcoming refugees. But we have to talk about what being a refugee means traditionally and still under the law to be a refugee.

That is a legal conclusion. It's not just a mere migrant to be a refugee. You have to have established that you fled your country because you either suffered past persecution or have a well-founded fear of future persecution by your government on account of one or more enumerated ground.

So on account of your race, your religion, your nationality, your political opinion, or your membership in a particular social group. And that last ground, membership in a particular social group, was never defined. And because it's vague, the left has driven a truck through it to declare anything to be membership in a particular social group.

One example I give is being a victim of domestic abuse. What social group is that and who wants to be a member of it? Nobody. And so we have gotten far afield from the traditional and the legal definition of what it means to be a refugee.

And it has just become another avenue of mass migration. And so when Christians talk about, well, we need to welcome the stranger, we have a set of laws. We are a nation, just like every other nation and every other nation seems to be able to, without criticism, enforce their laws, enforce their borders.

Why is it only the U.S. that can't do this? Because there's something else afoot here. So that would be my response. Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

And one of the things that I bring up as well, you'll recall 550,000 unaccompanied minors and 300,000 of them. And went missing and were susceptible, vulnerable to trafficking. We still don't know where some of these children are.

If we want to talk about being compassionate and loving and welcoming strangers, we don't do so by just losing children, inviting, you know, incentivizing them to come here to be, you know, dropped over a border wall or to be to pay traffickers to take our children unaccompanied through Central American countries, through Mexico, and just hope that somehow things work out for them. Well, that's what we've been. That's what the Biden administration was incentivizing.

It's I think of of Lake and Riley. It's just one example of someone who was she was sexually abused, I believe, and then beaten to death. Her attacker was from Venezuela.

He had repeated arrests and releases in the U.S. These types of crimes are obviously not compassionate, but I also think of of Israel, you know, was it was a theocracy with protected borders and foreigners had to obey Jewish law. They were expected to assimilate. There were restrictions on their the leadership roles they could hold and lending practices and they could become full citizens after only three generations of people showing that they were committed there to living as Israel would have them live.

So, yeah, all of these I there is so much that could be said, obviously. Can I address two points that you raised there? One was, again, going back to these NGOs that were really the army, if you will, for the Biden administration to carry out this mass migration to and throughout the U.S. Many of those NGOs are faith based organizations. It does all denominations, whether it's Catholic Charities, whether it was highest, the, you know, the Hebrew equivalent, whether it's Luther and Episcopal, you name it.

And many of these faith based organizations have grown wealthy and dependent on federal grant money to the point where they receive more federal grant money than they do from church donations. And so a lot of churchgoers, faith observant Americans were shocked to learn this. But it is important that they know it, that the many of the faith based organizations that they contribute to, that they participate in, have been carrying out mass migration and grew rich on it, but used the sympathy, empathetic angle to encourage more migration and more federal grants.

It's a system that needs to be broken. Second, unaccompanied alien children. This is something that kind of two causes for it.

One, right after 9-11, when Congress was considering the Homeland Security Act to create the Department of Homeland Security, the Democrats and the House Judiciary Committee in particular insisted that what used to be a function of the old INS, Immigration Naturalization Service in the Justice Department, of finding sponsors and shelter for unaccompanied children, not go to the Department of Homeland Security, but rather go to the Department of Health and Human Services. And second, during the 2000s, there was legislation that was circulating about, it was called the Unaccompanied Alien Child Protection Act. And what it did is it said, if you come as an unaccompanied alien child to the US, you're going to get to stay here, you're going to get taxpayer guardian ad litem, you're going to get special immigration benefits.

And all it did was good to encourage more parents to send their kids unaccompanied across the border and thereby endanger them. That passed in 2008. And if you look at the number of unaccompanied children crossings after that legislation passed, it goes straight up.

And yet Biden still managed to hit historic highs, as you said, 550,000 unaccompanied children in just four years. And now the Trump administration is busy looking for the 300,000 that HHS

lost track of. So that function of sponsors and shelter needs to go back to DHS.

It's not the proper mission of HHS. And clearly HHS is not good at it. And we need to repeal those benefits that are given to special unaccompanied alien children because it just encourages more of it, which is a difficult argument to make.

You talk about, you know, running on emotions and creating benefits and keeping them in place. That's a big one, but it needs to be done because it is a perverse system. What a good solution to this problem be to strengthen the economies of nations that are sending us immigrants, perhaps by trade or look like we're doing something with Argentina right now.

Is that a good way forward to try to alleviate poverty without causing this problem that you were just talking about? I mean, it's a combination of things. For decades, we've given foreign aid to many nations. And unfortunately, you know, due to corruption or other issues, it hasn't solved the problem.

And so these other countries keep sending or encouraging or looking the other way from, you know, large numbers of their nationals going to the U.S., you know, find work there. But, you know, send us the remittance money back to the home country after you make it. And so, you know, it's been a great deal for for many of these countries for for many years.

They get foreign aid. They're not responsible for finding employment from any of their nationals. And then they get the American tax or American dollars sent home afterwards.

So it's not just a matter of, you know, throw more money at those countries. If we want to make trade deals, if we want to near shore a lot of industry, you know, that would be advisable. Covid certainly taught us that we need to be making more products in the U.S. or in our Western Hemisphere.

So it's not difficult to imagine a situation where you can encourage these countries to create these industries, perhaps invest in that, develop their nationals to stay there and work in those industries, even send if, you know, we've got large populations here who are deportable back to those countries to work in the industries. It's not necessarily difficult. It just requires will.

Yeah. And one thing I've seen is that a lot of times faith based NGOs are part of the problem in a different way related to what you just said in that, for example, I've talked to a lot of different people in Africa who gained skills in engineering or agriculture, other skills. And then they say, well, there's no opportunity to to get paid anything using my degree, my skills here in my country because Americans are always coming and giving it for free.

And I can't compete with free. So I need to get to a Western country in order to be able to use my degree. But then those people have to wait 20 years or so going through the convoluted, ridiculous process of coming here legally.

And meanwhile, we're just ushering in people over the border who are perfectly willing to break

the law. Right. Yeah.

If it's easier, cheaper, faster to come illegally than legally, then that's what people do. Yeah. So another thing I hear from Christian leaders is this idea that Jesus was a refugee and therefore we need to welcome all refugees.

How how might you respond to that? Well, again, let's let's be clear that we're talking about illegal, legal refugees today and true persecution based on one of those enumerated grounds, not watering down the standards just to reach some higher arbitrary number of refugees that we bring in to as a feel good measure. We need to have a lawful, orderly and manageable immigration system each year. So one refugee is quite different than, you know, a hundred thousand every year.

And right now we've got pending in backlogs at DHS. There are over 11 million applications of all all immigration benefits types pending. And of that, there's I think one point five million, at least asylum applications.

Those are people who have already applied and are waiting. In addition to that, we've got over three million applications pending at in the DOJ immigration court system, over half of which are asylum applications. So we need to deal with those backlogs and get those backlogs down to manageable levels, not keep piling on to those backlogs, even more new applications.

So, you know, there's a lot of countries in this globe. We can't take everyone who wants to come here. So, again, we are a sovereign nation.

We get to determine who comes when, for how long, and under what situation. And we get to enforce our laws. Absolutely.

Yeah. From a biblical historical standpoint, Jesus actually was not a refugee by the definition that you mentioned definitions earlier. And he actually he was internally displaced.

He went from one part of the Roman Empire to another part of the Roman Empire. He and his parents were not sneaking over borders, going into different countries that were refusing them entrance. And I mean, it would be kind of like me going to a different state if, you know, if I lived in New York City and was being persecuted for my beliefs or something.

And so I went to Idaho when we bring together the practical as well as the biblical. It seems to me a silly argument that because one person moved now, therefore, everybody must be able to move absolutely wherever they want. Yeah, it's a good point.

And people throw around refugee term very loosely. Often it is just merely someone who is migrating or, as you say, an internally displaced person. Being a refugee is a legal conclusion.

And so people need to scrutinize use of that word. It's often used for emotional purposes. Right.

All right. So my background is corporate America. I'm a legal immigrant who had to get a sponsorship from a big, big company, IT company.

So I wanted to ask you this. I had to it was the reason I have an alias is because these IT companies that I was looking to sponsor me were often very left wing. Like they were platinum partners of the human rights campaign or something like that.

And so I had to make my way in a climate that was kind of hostile to my views. So I wanted to ask you about this in corporate America. You always hear the slogan diversity makes us stronger.

And that can sometimes be used as an argument for opening the borders and all the things that we're we're talking about. So does diversity caused by a loose immigration laws and weak border security make us better as a nation? Well, in terms of corporate America, you know, we're talking D.E.I. And I think it is generally on the downward slope. Corporations should be hiring for merit, not based on someone's skin color.

And I think some are changing its policies. We always have to look at are they just playing games and changing the labels, but still practicing the policies. But corporations have a fiduciary duty to their investors and their stockholders.

And so this D.E.I. nonsense is not an interest of those parties with respect to immigration policies. The U.S. has largely historically been based on assimilation. People came to America because they wanted to be American and they were willing to learn English and they were willing to they loved America and they loved they were loyal to their fellow countrymen.

But a number of decades ago, the left changed that posture and made assimilation a bad word and instead pushed multiculturalism. And said diversity is our strength. Well, you know, we happen to be named the United States of America, which means united one nation.

And when you push multiculturalism and separation, then you are on a path towards Balkanization and civil strife, if not civil war. And you get no go zones in cities and states. I mean, we've seen this again in European countries and European cities.

We are on that path. If you take, for example, Dearborn, Michigan, we recently had the mayor of Dearborn tell a Christian resident of Dearborn, you're not welcome here because you dare speak in opposition to renaming a street after a known terrorist. That's what we're talking about, where multiculturalism leads to if you allow it.

That is not loyalty. That is not a united community and it's not good for a united nation. So we need to get back to assimilation and teaching that in civics, a civic duty in our schools, encourage people to, again, join civic organizations and to love America, be loyal to the country and loyal to their fellow countrymen.

Otherwise, why are they here? Exactly, exactly. If they want to keep the culture that of their

country of origin, well, that's available. But that's wherever they came from.

And presumably, you know, depending on the situation, the country's all around them. My great grandparents came here from Italy and when they arrived, they said no more speaking Italian. And my dad asked his grandmother what our last name used to be because he knew it had been changed when they came here.

And her response was, it doesn't matter. You're American. You're an American now.

You appreciate America. This is your last name now. And you love it.

The Americans gave it to you. They welcomed you here. They welcomed me here.

And we're alive because of the Americans welcoming us. The end. And he was my dad's like, yes, ma'am.

It's the same thing for me. You can probably see, even though our listeners can't, that I'm wearing my Marines hoodie today. And this house is filled with military books.

And when I go on vacation, it's to military museumships or military museums. So when I got here, I started listening to Hugh Hewitt on the radio and he just did a complete redo of my fiscal views and then started reading Thomas Sowell on economics and all kinds of books on, you know, on education policy, health care policy and all these other things. And this is in addition to us being, you know, regularly talking about Christian apologetics, which is the defense of Christianity.

So I just want to say that sometimes legal immigrants do come here and we understand that the country we came from is not as good. And we want to learn how to be proper Americans. Yeah.

And actually, I was going to make the point, too. You asked the question, Wintry, you know, is is what do you think about diversity as our strength? You are a man of color, as they say today. And does your darker skin make your team better or is it your ability to actually code? That is a rhetorical question.

Obviously, we all know the answer to that. No, they want me for my coding. Exactly, exactly.

So we've kind of mentioned this. Our immigration laws should probably be focused on making it easier to let in people who who benefit this country who want to be here while keeping out those who intend harm on the country. Could you suggest some specific policy improvements that would be preferable to the system we have? Yes, we've talked about in the Trump administration, talked a little bit about this in the first term, but it requires congressional action.

And that's more of a merit based immigration system. So right now, about two thirds of the green cards that we issue is family based, one third employment based. And we have chain migration from that.

And so the majority of the numbers that we're bringing in lawfully, it's based on who you're related to, which isn't necessarily what Americans need in terms of job skills or what have you. And so we've advocated for reversing that ratio, narrowing the family based immigration to be about the nuclear family, spouse and minor children of the principal beneficiary, and then using those numbers to increase employment based legal immigration to address the skills that are needed in our economy. Also, you know, more vetting.

And this is happening in the Trump administration now in terms of naturalization applications. Those people are applying to become U.S. citizens. The Trump administration has restarted neighborhood visits to make sure the applicants are, you know, living not just living where they say they are, but do they seem like they're going to be good Americans? You know, what what sort of neighborhood do they live in? What's their the appearance of their house? Do they have pride in their their property? Do their neighbors know them? Are they involved in the in their communities? You know, those sorts of things.

And, you know, when we see, you know, the Dearborn mayor, for example, or even representatives in Congress pledge their priority to their foreign home country versus the U.S., we haven't been doing a good job of kind of vetting future citizens. So we need more of that. Absolutely.

Yeah, definitely. And I think not incentivizing any sort of, I guess, immigration from people who don't want to be here by offering so much welfare, federal aid, paying for everything for years and even generations. When previous generations came here, it was at great personal cost and they knew they were going to have to work hard and sacrifice greatly so that their children could have a better life.

And those people are devoted, patriotic Americans who want to be contributing members of society. And I love those immigrants. So I do a lot of work on Islam and studying the Quran, the Hadith.

I've spent time in several different Muslim majority countries and done a lot of studying on socialism as well. It seems like both socialists and Islamic militants are rapidly gaining a foothold in American institutions. Are there ways that we can identify people who do love American values and want to live under the U.S. Constitution versus those who want to remake America into another socialist country or an Islamic state? Yeah, this is certainly a movement, a foot, not just in the U.S., but in other countries as well.

There's been a real alliance between, you know, red and green, red being socialists and green being, you know, Islam. And we're on that path here. If you look at New York City, Seattle, mayoral race that we just had, Michigan, Minnesota, parts of Texas, this seems to be spreading.

So, again, it is about vetting and asking questions. I mean, the application forms will often ask, are you part of a terrorist organization? Are you part of a communist organization? People mark, no, we don't have enough government resources to go back to the person's home

country and go investigate if their story is true. But you can ask more questions in an in-person interview to really suss out, what does this person believe? What are they likely to do going into the future? And we can deny applications.

We should deny applications. We shouldn't just grant out of pressure or emotional blackmail or virtue signaling or whatever. We need to be granting immigration benefits to just those who are going to benefit America.

And we've seen growing anti-Semitism in the U.S. and other parts of the world. We know that the left has secularized the U.S. and other Western countries for decades. And so the question now is when people like Mondami, the mayor-elect of New York City, says, well, if you criticize anything about me or Islam, you're an Islamophobe.

Are people just going to back off just like, you know, for too long we did when someone was labeled a racist just to shut down the debate or people's ability to speak out? Or if you dare oppose mass immigration, you'd be labeled a racist. I think we've gotten to the point where we no longer just, you know, clam up to those claims of racism, whether it was dealing with DEI or mass immigration. The question now is, are we going to clam up when someone says, well, you're an Islamophobe.

If you dare speak out against what is happening and what's being said in some of these communities, or are we going to keep pushing back and speaking out against their intentions and wanting to continue to fight for United America and assimilation? Mm hmm. Exactly. Somalia is the second most dangerous country on planet Earth for Christians.

And we have we have a huge Somali population in Dearborn. I've had friends who have gone to festivals there. Muslims have come up and asked them questions about what they believe.

They shared openly what they believed in response to the question. And the Muslims called the police and the police arrested them and they spent time in jail for answering questions. And they so we need I mean, this is the way America is being remade.

One small town, one big city now at a time. We have to be so much more diligent about understanding people's views. I really don't think I mean, that people can lie.

They can deceive. I don't think it takes a genius, though, to always figure out what people's intentions are. I have a neighbor down the street from Democratic Republic of Congo.

This guy, he is he and his wife are wonderful. Their kids are wonderful. They're like, no, we're speaking English now.

He waves his American flag around the neighborhood when he walks. He's like, I love being in America. I'm so happy here.

We are going to work so hard. You are going to we are going to be the best neighbors. You are

going to be so happy.

We brought you here. We understand we have to prove ourselves. And I'm like, I love you.

Please stay in my neighborhood. And then and then there are other people who, you know, who are saying, are you a Christian? Oh, OK, then you hate Muslims. Oh, OK, then you're an Islamophobe.

You're this, you're that you're a racist. And we can ask questions, I think, in ways about what they're doing, what they're prioritizing to get at that sort of information. So we just I think we need to do a better job.

But we can't do that when we're when we're inundating the country with millions and millions of people at one time. Obviously, that's not realistic. Is there anything else you want to add that you might want our listeners to know about immigration and tell us where we can find your work online? You're doing phenomenal work.

I want to point our listeners to you, to your articles, to your work wherever we can find it. Well, sure. Just on that last point, I think this is really the fight we're going to be facing next.

And we need brave Americans to speak up that this isn't about religion. This is about political aim. And it is potentially about, you know, national security issues, protecting an American democracy, American republic.

And so we need people to continue to speak out and not fall susceptible to the race of Islamophobia. It's a made up term, but also it's not about religion. And thank you.

In terms of finding our work, you can go to Heritage.org. There is a border security tab there. And you can see our team's op-eds and our reports. There is a report up there kind of highlighted about building a new American immigration system and principles and policies.

You know, as we talked about earlier, our current immigration system, it's too confusing, complicated, slow, expensive, frustrating. And so we need to get to the point really where I'm at the point where we should just chalk the current Immigration and Nationality Act out the window. It's too confusing.

Too many exceptions. It just creates work for more immigration attorneys. We should have a much simpler immigration system that makes it possible to have that lawful, orderly and manageable immigration system each year.

So we are bringing immigrants to this country lawfully, but who also benefit this country and who are going to be loyal to this country and, you know, allow this country to exist another 250 years. Absolutely. I think that's a good place for us to stop for today.

So thank you so much for coming on the show, Laura, and sharing all of your insights on immigration policy with us. Listeners, if you enjoy the episode, please consider helping us out

by sharing this podcast with your friends, writing us a five star review on Apple or Spotify, subscribing and commenting on YouTube and hitting the like button wherever you listen to this podcast. We appreciate you taking the time to listen.

And we'll see you again in the next one. Thank you.