
RATIONAL MIDDLE PODCAST: EXPLORING “DECONSTRUCTED,” A NEW BOOK ON IMMIGRATION & CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Posted by Marek Brothers on November 10, 2020



The following article was authored by Charles Frantes :

Loren C. Steffy discussed the new book he co-authored with Stan Marek, *Deconstructed: An Insider's View of Illegal Immigration*, on a recent Rational Middle podcast with host Chris Lyon.

The book, which is available on Amazon , tells the story of Stan Marek's family and their specialty contracting business in Houston, MAREK . It also provides a history of immigration policy in the US and a detailed explanation of how a broken immigration system has fostered an unethical shadow economy in the construction industry, while exploring sensible solutions to this problem by the way of immigration reform.

In the interview, Steffy explained that in writing the book, one thing they wanted to highlight was the economic benefit of immigrants, which he says can get lost in politicized rhetoric.

“Part of the reason the American economy has been so strong the past 120 years is because we’ve had this constant supply of immigrant labor. As one generation moves up the educational chain and gets better paying jobs, we have another group coming in that is willing to fill the jobs that get left behind. That has made us a very strong country economically, but that message tends to get lost,” he said.

Steffy also discussed the topic that starts the book off, the 2009 ICE raid of MAREK. The raid underscores several broken aspects of the US immigration system, for example, that employers like MAREK often unknowingly hire unauthorized immigrants because by law they are not allowed to scrutinize their IDs, which are easy to forge.

Even more ironic, the unauthorized immigrants that ICE told MAREK to fire ended up working for its competitors down the road.

“Those guys didn’t get deported, it wasn’t like they went anywhere. They went home to the same houses they’d been living in, and a few days later they went to work for his competitors, who paid them 50% less and got all the benefits of the training MAREK had given them, and went out and competed with MAREK on bids, able to offer lower prices because they’re paying these well trained people half as much,” said Steffy.

Steffy explained that a lot of the industry’s workforce problems stem from worker misclassification, where employers hire workers as independent contractors instead of employees, which allows those employers to avoid the costs of providing benefits and paying payroll taxes. Many unauthorized immigrants work as misclassified independent contractors in the construction industry because it is easier than obtaining the necessary documents to complete a W-2 and work as an employee.

Stan Marek’s proposed solution to his industry’s problems of worker misclassification, which is explained in detail in the book, is a policy called ID and Tax and involves creating a method for unauthorized immigrants to obtain legal status so law-abiding taxpaying employers can legally hire them and bring them out of the shadow economy.

“It’s really the main focus of Stan’s efforts, to make it easier for employers to hire people legally, so they can get the workers they need, and the workers can have the dignity to not be afraid and fully participate in society. It’s not about citizenship, but it is about a way to bring these workers out of the shadows and get them much more productive and benefiting society in a better way,” said Steffy.?

Tags:

Rational Middle
immigration reform