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**Heritage Foundation Immigration Author Under Fire**

**By Sara Murray and Neil King Jr.**

It’s not just the Heritage Foundation’s research that’s controversial.

The conservative think tank earlier this week published a study – denounced by other conservatives – that concluded legalizing 11 million immigrants would end up costing taxpayers $6.3 trillion. By Wednesday the scrutiny had shifted to one of the report’s coauthors, **Jason Richwine**.

Mr. Richwine, who was hired as a senior policy analyst at the think tank last year, graduated from Harvard University with a Ph.D. in 2009. In [his Harvard dissertation](http://books.google.com/books?id=KvaMQwAACAAJ&dq=IQ+and+immigration+policy&hl=en&sa=X&ei=H62KUZikF8bC4APtm4GADQ&ved=0CEcQ6AEwAg) he asserted there were persistent differences between the average IQ of white Americans and that of immigrants. The relative IQs of different immigrant groups, he argued, should be weighed when determining who should be allowed permanent entry into the U.S.

The [Washington Post first published](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/05/08/heritage-study-co-author-opposed-letting-in-immigrants-with-low-iqs/) Mr. Richwine’s dissertation summary, which states, “The statistical construct known as IQ can reliably estimate general mental ability, or intelligence. The average IQ of immigrants in the United States is substantially lower than that of the white native population, and the difference is likely to persist over several generations. The consequences are a lack of socioeconomic assimilation among low-IQ immigrant groups, more underclass behavior, less social trust, and an increase in the proportion of unskilled workers in the American labor market. Selecting high-IQ immigrants would ameliorate these problems in the U.S., while at the same time benefiting smart potential immigrants who lack educational access in their home countries.”

The Heritage Foundation distanced itself from that work Wednesday and defended [its immigration cost study](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323826804578466843067225064.html).

“The Harvard paper is not a work product of The Heritage Foundation. Its findings do not reflect the positions of The Heritage Foundation or the conclusions of our study on the cost of amnesty to U.S. taxpayers, as race and ethnicity are not part of Heritage immigration policy recommendations,” vice president of communications **Mike Gonzalez** wrote in [a blog post](http://blog.heritage.org/2013/05/08/heritage-statement-on-the-cost-of-amnesty-study/).

Mr. Gonzalez added that Mr. Richwine did not set the methodology or policy recommendations for the Heritage study. “He provided quantitative support,” Mr. Gonzalez wrote.

Mr. Richwine made similar claims about race being deeply linked to one’s IQ as part of a 2008 [American Enterprise Institute panel discussion carried on C-Span](http://wwhttw.c-spanvideo.org/program/NewCas).

“The argument that immigrants themselves are no different from the ones that came 100 years ago I think is quite wrong, and I think that the major difference here is ethnicity — or race, if you will,” Mr. Richwine said in the discussion.

“There are real differences between groups, not just trivial ones that we happen to notice more than we should,” he went on to say. “Race is different in all sorts of ways and probably the most important way is in IQ.”

Mr. Richwine said a major hurdle for modern-day immigrants is that it’s more difficult to assimilate, and so they are more likely to create a parallel culture.

“I do not believe that race is insurmountable, certainly not, but it is definitely a larger barrier today than it was for immigrants in the past, simply because they are not from Europe,” Mr. Richwine said.

At least one person in the audience pointed out those comments were offensive. At the time, the interview [caused a stir](http://www.splcenter.org/blog/2008/09/04/white-nationalists-applaud-american-enterprise-institute-fellow/) among some immigration advocates.

When Mr. Richwine’s dissertation was unearthed Wednesday, it elicited an even wider backlash.

“The Heritage Foundation has always been a stalwart of conservatism, but this is commonplace, ugly racism and xenophobia dressed up in economic hyperbole,” said Texas Democratic Rep. **Ruben Hinojosa**, chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. “Richwine’s assertions show a man with a flawed understanding of human nature and of immigration. Those who come to America to seek freedom and opportunity arrive with the intent to work hard to build a new life.”

A member of the 2008 AEI panel, Mr. Richwine was on hand to discuss an anti-immigration book by **Mark Krikorian**, director of the Center for Immigration Studies.

At one point Mr. Richwine appears to acknowledge that his criticisms of immigration go beyond the author’s.

“In the book, when you say immigrants are no different than anyone else, it’s helpful because you can say, ‘well, at least I’m not like Richwine,’” he said. “Nevertheless I think it would be a lot healthier to discuss this issue – the racial issue here – because look, I mean, it’s here. It’s not going away and we can’t wish it away.”