



## CNN Newsroom

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PHILLIPS: President Obama spending one more day in southern California, where the green cars of the future are the green jobs of today. He's actually at the Edison Electric Vehicle Lab in the L.A. suburb of Pomona. We expect to hear him live in just a few minutes, and we'll take it. The Edison Lab, by the way, does research for Ford, which plans to market a battery electric vehicle in two years. Apparently he's been driving it around. Chrysler plans to sell four electric models in four years. GM hopes to get its Chevy Volt on the road late next year. The president wants a million plug-in hybrids on the road by 2015.

Well, highly skilled workers are key to expanding high-tech industries. And these days, many of the high-tech workers are immigrants. Supporters say that there simply aren't enough U.S.-born workers to fill the need, and they warn that the new immigration rules will only make things worse.

Let's bring in Matthew Slaughter. He's senior associate dean at Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business. Good to see you.

MATTHEW SLAUGHTER, SR. ASSOC. DEAN, DARTMOUTH'S TUCK SCHOOL OF BUSINESS: Thank you. Good to be here, Kyra.

PHILLIPS: So, you know, in particular, right now, in this time, a lot of people are saying, why should we be concerned with legal immigrants in this country when Americans are lining up across the country by thousands and thousands just trying to get a job?

SLAUGHTER: That's a great question. I think there's two things to think about. One is to understand that skilled immigrants have long been a source of job creation for the U.S. economy. They bring new ideas, new business connections and the ability to help create jobs in new companies and existing companies.

And the second point is to keep in mind that there is a lot of Americans who legitimately are hurting in the recession right now, but the way to support them is through an expanded and stronger social safety net, not through trying to put up barriers to immigration.

PHILLIPS: So, Matthew, can you give me some solid examples? Because if you are American A, sitting at home, frustrated as heck because you can't even put food on the table, and he or she is watching this interview, they're going crazy right now thinking, tell me why I should support this when I'm out of work.

SLAUGHTER: Great question. I'll start with my industry, higher education. American higher education has been a strong global industry in large part because we have welcomed immigrants both as students and as faculty. At the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth, about a third of our student body and about a third of the faculty are foreign-born.

And that's true in a lot of other really dynamic American industries. Studies have been done of biotechnology and information technology in the United States, and have found that a substantial fraction of the new jobs and new companies that have been created in the past generation in these key industries were founded by immigrants. So, that's a really important thing to keep in mind, which is the number of jobs in the U.S. economy is not fixed. It grows over time. Hopefully it grows through the support that immigrants provide.

PHILLIPS: Now, illegal immigrants. Are you even able to gauge what type of impact -- we talked a little bit with our Brooke Baldwin about that as she's been in tune with the Latino community here in Atlanta. Is that having an impact on where the economy is right now?

SLAUGHTER: It does. All forms of immigration have an impact on the total size of the economic pie for the U.S. and on the distribution of economic activity. And again, that comes to an important point that you raise which is there is a lot of American families and workers that are struggling, especially with the recession right now.

But the way to support them is through an expanded social safety net, things like wage loss reinsurance, things like greater health care coverage during unemployment spells. If we do that and combine it with especially skilled immigration policy that welcomes the job creation opportunities that those bring, that's going to be the way to help the American economy go forward.

PHILLIPS: Matthew Slaughter, interesting perspective. Appreciate your time.

SLAUGHTER: Thanks very much.

PHILLIPS: Americans have a lot of company in this recession that we're in. Its impact is being felt around the world from Jerusalem to Abu Dhabi to Madrid. We've got reporters in those cities with a look at how they're feeling the crunch as well.