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# Opinion

## Editorial Board

Publisher  
Mike O'Brien

Editor  
Joe Beach

Managing Editor  
Carl Sampson

opinions@capitalpress.com

Online: www.capitalpress.com/opinion

## OUR VIEW

# Congress must change federal immigration laws

When President Barack Obama announced in November he was taking executive action to temporarily change the status of as many as 5 million illegal immigrants, we said he was overstepping his authority.

A federal judge agrees. The president wants to defer deportation of illegal immigrants who have been in the country for five years or more, and who have a child who was born here. He also extended the deal to children brought into the country illegally by their parents before Jan. 1, 2010.

Those qualifying would be given

temporary legal status, and be granted work permits.

U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen, ruling in a case challenging Obama's action brought by 26 states, issued a temporary injunction halting the program.

Without ruling on the merits of the states' case, he said the president failed to follow the Administrative Procedure Act, which requires any change in federal rules be published and the public be given a chance to comment.

Allowing the program to go forward before the case is decided, he said, would make the action "virtually irreversible."

"The genie would be impossible to put back into the bottle," he wrote.

Hanen's 123-page order indicated he has concerns about the program's constitutionality.

"The DHS (Department of Homeland Security) does have discretion in the manner in which it chooses to fulfill the expressed will of Congress. It cannot, however, enact a program whereby it not only ignores the dictates of Congress, but actively acts to thwart them."

Indeed.

The president does not have the authority to grant work permits and temporary legal status to illegal immi-

grants. Article 1, section 8 of the Constitution gives Congress sole power to "establish a uniform rule of naturalization." Only Congress can change the law.

The law must be changed.

We continue to believe the answer is to offer illegal immigrants temporary legal status and a path to permanent residency after 10 years if they meet strict requirements — no prior felony convictions, no violations while awaiting residency, learning to speak English and pay a fine and back taxes. We think the border should be secured. A viable guestworker program must be established, and employers must veri-

fy the work status of their employees.

Not everyone agrees. Ask Americans what they think should be done about illegal immigration, and you'll likely get a variety of responses.

But as a practical matter, most everyone recognizes that 12 million illegal immigrants have changed the political and economic equation in the United States. It's a problem that must be dealt with.

As we said in November, let them stay, or make them go. Hard, or easy.

The answer may well be the result of a consensus of many stakeholders, but it's up to Congress to enact the enabling statute.



Rik Dalvit/For the Capital Press

## OUR VIEW

# Just say 'No' to grizzly bears

If you thought wolves were bad, wait until the federal government starts bringing grizzly bears into north-central Washington state.

That's right — grizzly bears.

Ranchers in northern Washington state have for years been coping with an onslaught of wolves moving in from Idaho and British Columbia. While most of the wolves have not created problems, some have. They've attacked livestock and threatened the livelihoods of some of the region's ranchers. Protected by the state and federal governments, wolves have started to work their way across part of the state, following their noses to their next meal. If that happens to be a rodent, elk or any other animal, the wolves don't really seem to care.

But when it's a cow or sheep, or even a guard dog, ranchers have a right to complain, especially when wildlife managers just seem to shrug and tell them to buy some flags and

flashing lights and get used to it. Management of wolves has bordered on inept, as state officials have been reticent to kill wolves even after repeated deadly attacks on livestock.

As they spread across the state, wolves will continue to cause problems for some ranchers, even those who use nonlethal means in an attempt to protect their livestock.

Grizzly bears, however, are a different type of predator. While wolves run in packs and are generally shy around people, bears don't care. There is an adage, "What do grizzly bears eat? Whatever they want." They go where the food is — they will eat berries, roots, fish or meat — and have no qualms about being around people. Reports of bear attacks against people are plentiful and should make even their most ardent supporters think twice about the prudence of introducing more grizzlies into the region.

That's why a proposal by the U.S. Department of the Interior to promote and rebuild the population of grizzly bears in Washington state should be rejected.

That a handful of grizzlies already live in portions of British Columbia is OK. But bringing them into the region is irresponsible — for the people who live in the region, for the other wildlife, for the salmon and for the livestock.

There's plenty of room in places such as northern British Columbia, Yukon Territory and Alaska for grizzlies to roam free.

In Washington state, with 7 million people, there's just not enough room for grizzly bears, too.

Protecting wolves as they have eaten their way across the state was a bad idea.

Bringing in grizzly bears and then protecting them is worse. Much worse.

# The fear of running out of farmers

By STEWART TRUELSEN  
For the Capital Press

Guest  
comment  
Stewart Truelsen



A demographic study of farming and ranching in Wyoming forecasts there will be no operators under the age of 35 by the year 2033. The study in Rangelands, a publication of the Society for Range Management, found that the average age of farmers has increased in every county in Wyoming since 1920, and will reach 60 by the year 2050. Based on these results, the authors predict a bleak farming future for Wyoming and the rest of the country where trends are similar.

Believe it or not, the fear of not having enough farmers and ranchers has been around as long as the first county Farm Bureau, founded a little over a hundred years ago in Broome County, New York. The concern back then was that too many young men were leaving the hard life of farming to seek gainful employment in the big cities. Farm Bureau was formed out of a desire to make farming more socially and financially rewarding.

The exodus from farms and ranches continued, however, but became far less worrisome because of mechanization and the tremendous increase in farm productivity. In fact, the pendulum swung the other way. During much of the 20th century there were too many people trying to make a living from farming, and too much land was in production.

The aging of the farm workforce became noticeable in the 1950s and has continued relatively unabated ever since. The average age of farmers was 48.7 years in 1945, the first year it was officially reported in the Census of Agriculture.

The average age now is 58.3 years. The share of farmers age 65 and older was 14 percent in 1945: It is now 33 percent. Only 6 percent of farmers are under the age of 35.

Do all these numbers spell big trouble for the nation's agriculture? Not necessarily. The entire American workforce is aging. By the year 2020, 25 percent of the labor force will be over 55, up from 12 percent in 1990. Agriculture, real estate and education are the three employment categories with the highest number of workers over 55. An older agricultural workforce is nothing new, at least not in the last half century.

Generally speaking, today's 65-year-old is better educated, healthier and more willing to extend their working years than seniors in the past. It seems fair to say that a 58-year-old farmer today is comparable to a 48-year-old farmer in 1945. According to the Stanford Center on Longevity, agriculture will need to rely on a larger share of older workers and use them as well to train young workers. The U.S. birth rate is projected to average 4.6 million per year from 2015 to 2060, that's more than the peak year of the baby boom.

American agriculture has a recruiting job to do, but it has never been in a better position to convince future generations to become farmers and ranchers.

Stewart Truelsen, a food and agriculture freelance writer, is a regular contributor to the American Farm Bureau's Focus on Agriculture series.

## Readers' views

### Public officials lack common sense

I'm older than some and younger than others, but in this life I don't think that I've ever seen the likes of public officials as there are today. They have no common sense or virtue about them anymore.

Just when the economy was reasonably getting better the president (not mine) was sitting back and watching our ports slow down to a crawl. Here in California we haven't seen unsold hay in barns in a lot of years.

People don't have money anymore and they (the government) are spending ours elsewhere on other things. Go figure. They are trying to regulate our air and water, all the while selling diesel-powered vehicles.

Next time we all vote, just say no!

Quit paying taxes and, believe me, I love my country but we as American citizens must at some point say "No" to all of the

above.

God bless the USA.

Dave Tankersley  
Willits, Calif.

### First lady's 'experiment' falls short

A block of cheese is given to an 8-year-old who wasn't able to turn it into cheese powder, so therefore cheese powder isn't really food.

It is this kind of logic that seems to prevail in the Obama family. Did they also give the 8-year-old some steel, plastic and glass and ask her to make a car, and since she couldn't, say there is no such things as cars?

I would also question the presence of a box of macaroni and cheese in the White House when there is a staff using the finest ingredients and does all the food preparation.

I really doubt they are using fast-food mixes for his majesty

and his family.

Two more years of endurance with this outfit.

Arvid Myhre  
Cambridge, Idaho

### All wealth comes from the land

Access and use of the land is perhaps the most important issue facing America today. The problem is that so few people recognize the problem and how it relates to them, particularly those who live in the metropolitan areas.

I say most important because no industry, no business and no jobs can continue without the products and resources that are recovered from the earth.

Another fact that few are aware of is that all new wealth comes from the ground — there is no other source. It is created when farmers, ranchers and fishermen harvest the food and fibers in their crops and timbermen, miners and oil men recover

our vital resources. This wealth is expanded when we process and manufacture more useful products from these resources.

All others share this wealth by distributing the products or by providing a service to one another. Thus the basic industries are the foundation of our entire economy.

Our forefathers realized early on that if our country was to grow and prosper they needed to stimulate people to go out to the empty land to develop farms and find and recover the essential mineral resources. So they passed the Homestead Act, mining laws and granted rights-of-way for roads and ditches. Now our country has serious economic problems and needs more jobs and money.

The problem is that the agencies that have been charged with administering our lands, the Bureau of Land Management, Environmental Protection Agency and so forth have been so carried away with issuing a never-ending series of regulations restrict-

ing the use of the land, often disregarding federal law and decisions of the highest courts of our land, that they are destroying the very industries that supply the wealth and resources that support our country.

They have been so carried away by environmental policies and their slogan, "Save the Earth," that they have forgotten the basic fact of life — that no life on earth can survive unless we harvest the food and resources of the earth.

It is a noble thing to save a few places for the future, but you can't save them all.

The same forces that uplifted our beautiful mountains brought minerals to the surface and changed the climate to make timber growth productive.

Unless we reassess our access and use of the land policies our country is facing an economic breakdown and your job and all environmental concerns will go out the window.

Kenneth Anderson  
Baker City, Ore.