

# Face off: illegal immigration

## Immigrants already abused - criminalization won't help

**E. E. West**

*The Clackamas Print*

The United States is a country almost entirely composed of immigrant peoples, and yet there has always been a streak of xenophobia in the American social fabric.

Germans, Scottish, Irish, Italians, Chinese — all these groups and more have encountered bitter resistance in their adopted homeland. From the beginning of the 20th century to the present the issue of Mexican immigration has been a focal point of America's fear of the unfamiliar.

No, illegal Mexican immigration is not a new issue by any stretch of the imagination. Just ask your mother, father or grandparents, and they will tell you that the "illegal problem" has been with us for at least as long as they've been alive. The issue comes up every few years or so, as some political figure or other attempts to make a name for himself by blustering about the scourge of illegal immigrants. Despite the fact that there's been much sound and fury about the subject, next to nothing has ever been done about it. Why might this be?

Let's imagine a hypothetical illegal immigrant, newly come to America in search of a job that simply doesn't exist back home in Mexico. Because he has no legal status in the United States he is forced to take a job under the table or with false identification. His employer knows full well that he is not in the states legally, and that he has little or no recourse should he be paid less than the going rate for the job. Beggars can't be choosers after all.

More rarely employers will treat such immigrants poorly in defiance of labor laws, secure in the knowledge that their employees will either take it or risk deportation. This, needless to say, works to an employer's benefit.

Many smaller employers are simply doing what they can to keep competitive in a fierce market; they have few options but to hire those who will work for the lowest wage. Other, larger employers are not so blameless.

To see just why illegal immigration has never been dealt with we only need to examine those who make immigration laws, and how they come to power. Representatives and senators rely in part on the contributions of large employers to fund their campaigns. Is it any wonder then that both houses have persistently refused to change a situation that favors their contributors?

Lately a vocal segment of the body politic has been advocating "stricter" immigration

laws that would criminalize illegal immigration. They would see the estimated 11 million illegal Mexican immigrants in the United States today become felons, with absolutely no possibility of ever becoming citizens.

This same group would love to see a 700-mile long, dual-layer wall along the Mexico-U.S. border, watched ceaselessly by border patrol. The immense cost of such a policy becomes all too ironic when you consider that one of the primary objections this group has is that illegal immigrants eat up social benefits that would otherwise go to citizens. Apparently spending vast sums of cash on a police state is not nearly as wasteful as feeding, clothing and giving medicine to needy human beings.

To criminalize immigrants is to marginalize them even further than they already have been. By labeling them felons we will only encourage those who use the illegal status of immigrants to their advantage.

One thing is certain: as long as America remains a place in which a person has a reasonable chance at securing a happy, fruitful life, people are going to want to come here and they are going to find a way to make it happen. I for one hope we are never rid of that "problem."

## No matter the idealism, immigration is a problem

**Elizabeth Hitz**

*The Clackamas Print*

They called it "May Day," and it was a plea for help, though not in the way you might think. On May 1, hundreds of thousands of people across America marched in protest of a bill.

That bill, which has already passed in congress, will put up a 700-mile wall across the United States and Mexico border. It will also make being an illegal alien a felony, as well as forbid any illegal immigrants already on American soil from ever becoming American citizens.

Bleeding heart stories and phrases like "The American Dream" are all very idealistic, but it's time that politicians and the American people face the music. However harsh reality can be, it remains a necessity. Our government is not prepared to deal with the number of illegal immigrants that flood the United States every year. It creates a rapidly growing populace that we simply do not have the resources for.

States like California and Arizona are going

bankrupt trying to fund things like public education and healthcare for illegal immigrants.

However, economists say that we cannot deport all of the illegal aliens because they make up a pillar of our workforce. But without all of those extra bodies, would we be facing the massive work shortage we are now? There would be many more entry-level positions open to the American worker. Some people look down on manual labor or low skill jobs as menial; but to the average Joe a job is a job.

Bush has recently put forth a plan to use thousands of National Guard troops to patrol the U.S./Mexico border. The cost of such a scheme seems horrendous; \$1.9 billion in emergency funds will be needed to even execute the intended proposal. And there is a high probability that another \$20.3 million will be needed to hire more judges to help the court system adjust to the extra court cases which would result as a side effect of Bush's plan.

But the fact is this — it is a plan. An intended set of actions, which is more than most administrations would ever attempt. Something has to be done. On that fact alone all of the political parties agree.

But what kind of affirmative action have they promoted? None. Passive-aggressive attempts by Democrats and Republicans seem to come in the form of more paperwork, like the proposed orange cards which would allow illegal immigrants here longer than two years a chance at citizenship. But paperwork is not the answer for an already overburdened and overstrained INS. Some sort of definitive action is needed to stem or at least slow the flow of this massive problem. An estimated 2 million illegal immigrants live and work in the United States, and the numbers only grow continually.

I am not saying we should stop immigration altogether, or that immigrants should be treated any differently than any natural-born U.S. citizen. My father's parents were both immigrants. I know how hard it was for them, and how hard they worked to get where they did.

What I am saying is that we have to draw the line with illegal immigration. If we do not curb the idealistic nature of our own nation, we could very quickly cause our own destruction.

As much as we would like life to be perfect for everyone in the world, we cannot make every person in a third world country an American citizen and we cannot sacrifice our own country's wellbeing on the altar of Utopia.

If there is a plea for help, it is from our own government, and it is a plea for reason.



Illustration by E. E. West  
Clackamas Print

## From 'No Child Left Behind' to 'No Child Left Alone'

**Laura Cameron**

*Commentary Editor*

The Pentagon has a file on every student on this campus.

That's right, every single one. They have their names, addresses, emails and cell numbers. They know where they were born, what their grades are, their credit information and their Social Security numbers. They know everything.

No, this is not a conspiracy theory. This is part of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Section 9528 of the act requires secondary schools — the definition of which

varies from state to state to include junior highs, high schools and colleges — to provide "directory information" of all their students to military recruiters.

Section 9528 was added after intense lobbying by the Pentagon; hardly surprising, considering that one-third of all school districts in America had policies against giving student information to recruiters before the act was passed. We all know that the military is hurting for recruits.

But this goes beyond making it easier for recruiters to call students at home. According to Oregon Senator Ron Wyden, "the Pentagon has retained a private marketing firm to gather and analyze extensive personal information

about high school students for the stated purpose of identifying potential military recruits."

This program is called JAMRS, Joint Advertising Market Research & Studies, and the information the firm is gathering for the Pentagon can include credit card records, Social Security numbers, DMV records, grade-point average, class schedules and ethnicity. This information is purchased from a variety of other firms, including ones that process college scholarship and loan applications.

Yes, students have the opportunity to opt out, but considering how quiet everyone has been on this issue I can't imagine that most students even know

it exists.

This is sickening. The government does not need to know what classes I am taking, nor my driving record. The fact that a private company is compiling this information makes me even more nervous. Can anyone here say "identity theft?" Not to mention that this is a gross violation of the Privacy Act and possibly a violation of the Fourth Amendment.

I thought the Republicans were supposed to be all about "getting government off the backs of the people." Now that they're in power, it appears that they are not only on our backs more than ever are but peering over our shoulders.

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