

# Good Fences?

WALLS AREN'T THE IMMIGRATION ANSWER

**R**obert Frost's poem "Mending Wall" is often misquoted by opponents of immigration reform because a portion of the poem reads "Good fences make good neighbors." As Frost tells it:

*There where it is we do not need the wall:  
He is all pine and I am apple orchard  
My apple trees will never get across  
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.  
He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'  
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder  
If I could put a notion in his head:  
Why do they make good neighbors?*

The poem is narration between two neighbors. One neighbor continues to keep a fence because he sees it as beneficial to separate the land. Yet the other neighbor, the narrator, does not feel that a wall is necessary. Many see "good fences" as a fix on a broken immigration system. Good fences only make for a wall of separation, which is illusory at best. No one would argue about a need for real comprehensive immigration reform, but this is more than a bigger and better fence. Here are some problems with the current bill looking to fix existing policy.

The Comprehensive Southern Border Security Strategy immigration bill was recently introduced on Capitol Hill. A group of senators, four Democrats and four Republicans, calling themselves the Gang of Eight, have brought it forward. There are requirements that must take place before any portion of its policy can be

enacted. The language of the bill calls these requirements triggers. No pathway to citizenship will be cleared until these triggers take place. I have an issue with this.

Those seeking citizenship will apply for a newly created Registered Provisional Immigrant status. In order to qualify, one must have resided in the U.S. before Dec. 11, 2011. Those arriving after this date may not apply. Applicants would need to pay fines, fees and any back taxes owed. They must pass a background check and have no disqualifying criminal record. Only then would they have access to citizenship. This entire process could take up to 13 years, but in the meantime, those with RPI status would be legally present in the U.S.

Border security is the first requirement to trigger RPI status. The bill's language states that "high risk border sectors" must be secure and have "persistent surveillance." A recent amendment has been made to the bill, adding 700 miles of triple-layered walls. It also adds 15,000 security personnel, bringing its total to 20,000 new border agents. There would also be unmanned drone surveillance 24 hours, 365 days a year. Our southern border is starting to feel claustrophobic. This greater security would cause less immigration traffic, but at what cost? Frost's wall is getting bigger and bigger.

Another requirement is the visa backlog reduction. Under the bill those who have filed for legal permanent residency or "green cards" must be processed before

RPI applicants. This type of policy has been described as a "back of the line" provision. The green card line has a waiting period of up to 10 years. Adding to the 13 years for those with RPI status, this would create a waiting period of 23 years.

The proposed bill will create a Nonimmigrant Agricultural Visa program. Like the Bracero program of the 1950s, which brought in migrant workers for only a growing season, these programs have never been productive. They do not benefit the public. They only result in a greater profit margin for the corporations utilizing the work. Guest worker programs are not a fix for the broken immigration system. Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders has called this "a massive effort to attract cheap labor." Frost and the neighbor will have help mending the wall and for mere pennies.

This bill is not the answer. We deserve better than this. No one is happy with it. Even Republicans who have introduced it are positioning themselves for a "no" vote. It has been so compromised that the bill no longer makes sense. No one argues the need for reform. But we are being given a longer line for green cards, a guest worker program that will not help our failing economy and a massive enclosure at our southern border. A vote has passed to begin debate on the bill. I hope common sense wins over partisan bickering. We can no longer pretend that the 11 million people currently living in the shadows are not our neighbors. I am not willing to give up my freedom for any bill. I implore you to ask as Frost does:

*Before I built a wall I'd ask to know  
What I was walling in or walling out. ■*

Silverio Anthony Mogart is a community organizer and activist. He has worked for President Obama, Gov. Kitzhaber and Eugene's Diversity and Equity department. He is currently an executive member of the local LULAC council, the oldest and largest national Latino rights organization based out of Washington, D.C. Que Pasa is a monthly column featuring the opinions of Lane County's Hispanic community.

## SPECIAL FINANCING NOW AVAILABLE!

Visit  
*ECO Sleep Solutions*  
for details!

541-343-1022  
25 E. 8th Ave. Eugene  
[www.ecosleepsolutions.com](http://www.ecosleepsolutions.com)  
Closed Sunday and Monday



## SUMMER IS HERE

We have activities scheduled for the whole summer beginning with July 4th Fireworks, July 6th Live Music, July 13th help us break our Skinny Dip record of 258 people and July 27th Open House. Check out our web site for all of the informaton and visit us on Facebook.



**The Willamettans**  
A clothing optional RV Resort

Swimming Pool • Tennis Courts • Horseshoes • Camping or Rentals

**541-933-2809** [willamettans.com](http://willamettans.com)  
aanr.com • 1-800-TRY-NUDE



ANNOUNCING THE

## XYLEM CLOTHING

SUMMER WAREHOUSE SALE: 25-60% OFF EVERYTHING  
WE ARE A LOCAL ORGANIC CLOTHING COMPANY  
CELEBRATING OUR 10TH YEAR!



COME VISIT OUR NEW WAREHOUSE!  
Please join us on the Holiday Weekend for organic food, local wine, beer & kombucha at our Warehouse where everything in stock will be 25 -60% OFF.

**SATURDAY JULY 6TH**  
**FROM 11AM UNTIL 5PM**

495 Hwy 99 North • Unit 5  
Eugene Oregon • 541-953-7799  
[XYLEMclothing.com](http://XYLEMclothing.com)

## ONE DAY ONLY!