

Dreamers from 1A

The Pew Research Center looked at the kinds of jobs illegal immigrants take, and found that the majority were focused on lower-skilled, low-paying jobs.

The study, which surveyed workers between 2012 and 2015, found that only 0.5 percent of U.S.-born workers were employed in farming, fishing or forestry, while four percent of unauthorized aliens work in those fields.

These numbers are of particular concern to the Siuslaw region, as these industries have been its lifeblood for decades. As the industries declined, the economies of towns like Mapleton and Swisshome were virtually decimated with closures.

While some local officials are working to bring back these jobs, the industry is not completely gone. And the ones that do remain are having difficulty filling positions.

Florence resident and Dreamer Javier, who prefers to remain anonymous, has seen this first hand when working in the logging industry.

“I’m not taking anybody’s job,” Javier stated. “Whoever wants to work, they should work. Nobody wants my logging job.”

The Siuslaw News confirmed with one of the largest employers in the area, that Javier’s assessment was sound.

“It’s not just logging,” one employer stated. “Manual labor jobs are almost impossible to fill in industries that require hard physical work.”

“You know how many people who have been hired on (to Javier’s job) and they’ve only lasted a day?” Shirley, Javier’s wife, asked.

“There’s open jobs,” Javier

agreed. “They call me from Reedsport and ask if I want to work. I say no, I’m already working. They ask if I know if anybody wants to work. No, not right now, I say. Logging is hard and not everybody can do it.”

Florence resident Ian Eales, who is an immigrant from Canada, believes that problems in filling jobs are an issue with how youth view working. .

“We have two, maybe three generations who have never done any physical work,” he said. “I’m not blaming the kids, but they don’t have to do anything. They’ve never been required. For the people that make just a middle class wage, their kids don’t have to do anything. You see 6 year olds with iPhones. I think we’ve kind of lost the plot and the value of doing something.”

“They have no concept of what it takes to pull yourself up, which the immigrants really do,” he continued. “I had a friend who came from Cuba with a dollar in his pocket and the shirt on his back, and he made it.”

There is evidence to back up Eales’ views.

In a recent survey by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), of Americans 18 to 25, 43 percent of respondents said they would never work in construction trades no matter what the pay level was. Forty-three percent said they would only work in the industry if they made over \$75,000.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics found that the medium wage for construction laborers was only \$33,000.

The most popular trades for this age-range are business management, IT/technology, medical, marketing and media. Half of the respondents stated that they wanted a “less physically-demanding job.”

To summarize, immigrants aren’t taking away manual labor jobs; Millennials just don’t want them.

As far as immigrants coming over illegally, people have different views.

“I think everybody should go through the (legal) process,” Shirley said. “I don’t think it should be ‘You’re legal because you’re here.’ It’s a long, hard process that (Javier’s) going through. And he’s paid a lot of money for attorneys and done a lot of paperwork, but I think that everybody should have to do that. I like the idea with them committing no crimes. And a probation period. I think that’s important too.”

If Javier, who arrived as a child from Mexico, knew someone who was thinking of coming into the country illegally, he would tell them not to.

“It’s not okay. I wouldn’t tell anybody to come up here right now. Maybe if I had a son who was close to me, I would try and bring him up legally.”

For Eales, who overstayed a visitor visa from Canada, the issue is not as cut and dry.

“Life is a risk. If they’re willing to take that risk and come in and suffer the consequences, if you think you have something to offer and you can make it work and you can get by an impenetrable system, then by all means, get here.”

“That’s the contradiction,” he continued. “There’s a billion rules. We don’t spit on the sidewalk. We don’t drive through red lights. This is a personal thing that will not hurt anyone else. I always said, my rights end at the end of your nose. If you do something that hurts someone else, then you should stop. If I don’t think that my coming here is going to hurt anyone and will

ultimately be a benefit, and be a huge benefit for people, then it’s the greater good. There’s no black or white. It’s conscious.”

That “impenetrable system” is becoming even more impenetrable by the day. According to the National Visa Center, as of November 2016, more than 4 million immigrants are awaiting permits to enter the country. Immigrants can wait 10 years, or more, for permits.

This is not to say Eales is against strong border security, an issue that has received bipartisan support for decades.

For Javier and Shirley, border security is a big issue, but not because people are here looking for jobs.

“I’m more concerned with all the drugs that are coming in here,” Shirley said. “I think there is a difference between people wanting to come over here and make a life and get away from the poverty and the drugs and the gangs. The ones who are coming over here and committing a lot of crimes, and bringing a lot of drugs, then I don’t think that’s okay.”

In their mind, stronger border security would be a good thing.

While Javier came here for education, he fears being deported because of the violence in Mexico right now.

“Right now, you can’t even walk on the streets. I hear from my grandma, my aunts, that in our little town, everybody needs to be inside the house by 9 o’clock,” he said. “Nobody walks outside. They’ll pick you up, they’ll take you away, and we won’t see you anymore. They’ll ‘disappear’ you.”

Javier and Shirley hope that the border is secured because, if it isn’t, the same problems from Mexico will seep into America. In that regard, they’re more

refugees than immigrants looking for work.

Getting rid of criminals has never been a point of contention in the political debate, but even that conversation can be muddled.

On March 26, 2017, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) conducted a raid in Florence. Four men were arrested, one of whom Javier knew well.

The incident sparked a debate among the Florence community regarding the immigration policies of President Trump, and whether or not the city should become a protected sanctuary of illegal immigrants.

For those in favor of the action, their argument was that federal laws were being enforced.

For those against, it was the federal administration turning Florence into a police state.

Javier and Shirley didn’t see the ICE incident in the black and white terms they felt many of the arguments were taking.

While the Siuslaw News was unable to confirm Javier’s account, he stated that one of the arrestees was warned that ICE was coming.

“ICE got (the arrestee) twice,” Javier said, the first time being five years ago.

“The first time, they took a lot of guys, but they let a lot of guys go because they were good people with clean records. But he got a couple of DUIs. He spent two months in jail, but he got a lawyer and they let him out.”

The arrestee worked with his lawyer to get a work permit, but it didn’t go through.

“The lawyer told him that he would be taken to court,” Javier said. “He didn’t believe that they were going to come pick him up. And for a long time, nothing happened.”

Until ICE came and arrested him.

to get it. But it’s taken about the same time. I was hoping to get it within months.”

This is what keeps Javier up at nights; not the fear of deportation by the Trump administration, but a fear the bureaucratic delays will force him out of the country.

This isn’t to say that Shirley and Javier are completely out of the loop when it comes to politics. Since immigrant issues gained national headlines, Javier has been following the issues more closely.

“We were never really big on politics,” Shirley said. “My family, when I grew up, they didn’t vote. Here in Florence, they set a fire in me to educate myself and learn more about politics. Not just this, but with everything. It’s important. We just get so busy and caught up in our daily lives that we forget what’s going on around us.”

And it’s the politics that are enveloping the nation.

This week, a flurry of national news came out on DACA.

On Wednesday, Democratic leaders spoke of a meeting they held with Trump in which they said a deal had been reached that would tie DACA to stronger border security funding.

On Thursday, Trump and House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis) stated that a deal had not been reached. Trump then suggested any DACA deal would be tied to the construction of a border wall.

But on Friday, reports from multiple news agencies surfaced stating a deal had in fact been reached

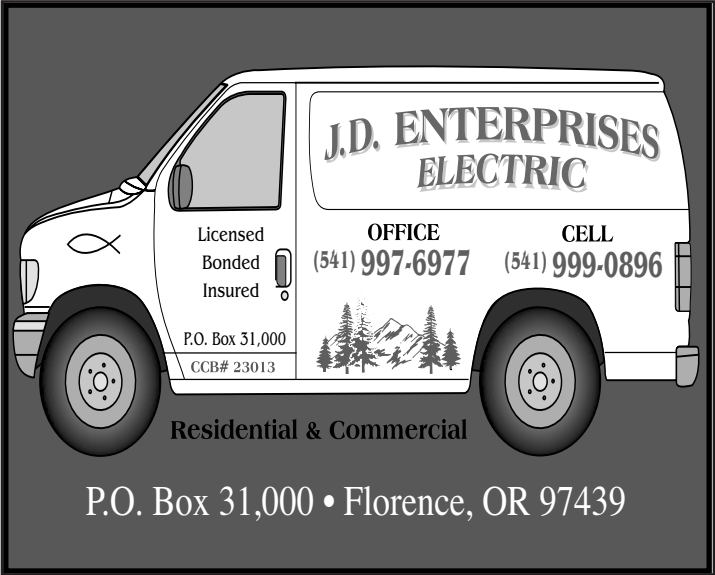
Dealing with the Democrats, particularly without Republican input, led to consternation among some of Trump’s party. The internet meme “Amnesty Don” began, with videos of supporters burning their red “Make America Great Again” hats being posted.



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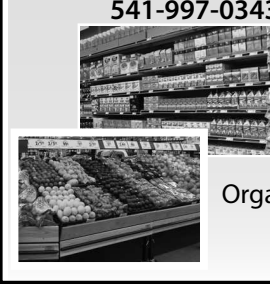
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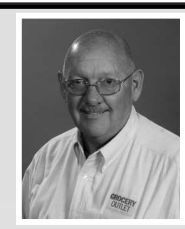
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