

# **Illegal Immigration**

## *A Complex Problem with No Easy Solution*

By David L. Miner

There have been hundreds of substantial articles (and thousands more with little substance) concerning what is usually called illegal immigration. The articles, and the perspectives expressed in those articles, have their roots in pretty much one of two camps.

The more politically correct articles have eschewed labels that might make these people feel bad and have suggested or demanded some degree of amnesty. The argument is usually made that these people are merely trying to get ahead in life, something made quite difficult in their natural countries. Most of the articles emphasize that the decisions to migrate to America were made to benefit the children, giving them access to better living conditions, education, healthcare, and other tangible improvements over the existing situations in which those children were growing up. And these articles almost always include or make reference to pleas to not break up families in order to apply or enforce existing immigration laws. Most of these articles claim that the existing laws on immigration are broken and need fixing.

The less politically correct articles have opted for a “say it like it is” approach to labels and demanded no amnesty in any form. Phrases like “illegal immigrants” “illegal aliens” are common in these articles, as are calls for the application and enforcement of existing immigration laws. Concerns over breaking up families are often cast aside with statements like, “They should have thought of that when they decided to sneak into our country illegally.” The parallel is sometimes made to the father who robs a grocery store because his family is hungry. He gets caught and sent to prison. Not one outcry is heard to ignore the laws, excuse the father, and reunite the family in spite of the legal infractions. So why, it is argued, should the illegal alien be excused and allowed to remain free just because he “did it for the children”? Most of the articles written from this perspective claim the immigration laws are not broken at all, and need enforcement rather than fixing.

I cannot add much to the respective positions in this argument that has not already been said many times over by more eloquent authors and speakers than myself. There is, however, something that I can add to the argument – a workable solution.

Regardless of the chosen perspectives of the various authors of these many articles, there are some commonalities pertaining to these issues to which most of them agree.

First, it is commonly agreed that the problem exists today because Congressional Representatives and White House occupants over at least 20 years or more have

abdicated their respective responsibilities and totally ignored the problem. Presidential policies, spoken or unspoken, have resulted in minimal or no enforcement of existing laws by the federal agencies charged with immigration law enforcement. Congressional inaction has resulted in low or non-existent funding for many of the political promises concerning these issues. This abdication by both Congressional as well as Presidential public servants clearly includes both Democrats and Republicans, unless, of course, you are a Democrat or Republican. Naturally, the Democrats blame the Republicans and Republicans blame the Democrats, but that is simply “politics” which, by most definitions, allows for lies and misrepresentations with no accountability.

But clearly little or nothing has been done about the problem while it was still a problem that could have been managed, waiting instead to address the problem when it was too big to fix. This abdication by our past and present elected federal public servants is inexcusable, so much so that my suggestion would be to eliminate the huge retirement benefits of all of our elected Congressional employees and all the presidents, to include any who served this country at any time over the last twenty years. Arguably, an illegal invasion of more than 20 million and as many as 40 million individuals results in an economic impact that is as huge and potentially disastrous as any military war. If our elected public servants didn't do their jobs, resulting in an almost unsolvable problem for both legal Americans and illegal aliens today, then why should Americans continue paying their exorbitant retirement benefits as if they did a good job? Forgive me for my simplicity, but as an employer for many years, I do not see the reason to continue paying employees for doing a poor job.

The second commonality is the sheer complexity of the problem. Any suggested ideas or solutions have ripple effects that some say will be devastating. It matters not which of the two basic perspectives presumed by the proposed solution, the other perspective will point out the huge cost in money to the country and distress to the families. And naturally, a suggestion by the “enforce the laws” crowd will include pointing out all the horrible effects of the latest suggestion by the “amnesty” crowd, and vice versa. Also naturally, each side denies the horrible effects of their own suggestions. But if even half the allegations are true, every serious suggestion coming out of political rhetoric and major editorial pundits has serious and perhaps insurmountable political and economic effects on the country as a whole.

An example of this ripple effect would be the offer of citizenship to as many as 40 million men, women and children in America without the benefit of the existing legal process. Many claim that the workers in this large population only take such low-paying jobs that Americans would not accept. Whether or not this is true, let us allow for the moment the presumption of fact. Suppose these millions of low-paid workers become American citizens. Then the low pay they have been accepting becomes a legal, raising their low pay to at least minimum wage. Suddenly, the prices of the products and services with which these new citizens are involved increase radically. Your carrots and broccoli and oranges and wine and many other products suddenly increase, causing the stores selling these products to experience reduced sales, which in turn cause lay-offs. The cost of hotel rooms and other commodities requiring these low-paying workers increase

substantially, since the employees are now being paid minimum wage and not the supposedly “low wages” that Americans would not accept. (Remember, it is continuously claimed that these workers only take jobs that pay too low for Americans to accept. And since as many as 100 hundred million Americans are receiving minimum wage, according to some of the economic figures presented in discussions of raising the minimum wage, it must be stipulated that the wage accepted by these workers is much less than minimum wage. To suggest otherwise renders the claim that Americans would not accept the wage absolutely and clearly false.) This increase in room rates and other commodities results in decreased occupancy or decreased purchases, which also results in layoffs. And the ripple effect goes on. Needless to say, the layoffs will be predominantly involving the low wage earners, and they will go on unemployment. So not only do the federal and State governments receive less in taxes, they are forced to expend more in welfare benefits. These obvious ripple effects produce what might be considered a “double negative” effect, making the actual costs to Americans much higher than would normally be admitted. With the budget deficits of every major city and all 50 States being at record levels from the benefits being currently handed out by the federal and State governments, the effect of millions more new Americans receiving benefits would push most States, and most likely the federal government, into fiscal disaster. The economic effects here in America and around the world would include stock markets, currency markets and national reserves, having a devastating financial effect on all Americans and much of the world

And allow me to take a moment to discuss WHY these ripple effects will be so injurious. Almost all politicians and media talking heads claim that there is an “estimated 11 million illegal aliens” in America. **THIS IS A LIE**, and they all know it.. The comment of “11 million illegal aliens” originated with then President Bill Clinton in a public address he gave in 1995. And all claims since that time have used the SAME number of 11 million illegal aliens. And yet every State and federal agency charged with knowing these issues claim that somewhere between 1 and 1.5 million MORE illegals enter America every year. So do the math. Take 11 million illegal aliens in 1995. Then add 1-1.5 million more each year for the last 21 years. Multiply that out and add it all up and you have 35-40 million illegal aliens currently in America. They are all LYING about the real number to keep Americans from understanding the real problem that we are facing.

And to give equal time to the “enforce the laws” perspective, if all or even most of the illegal workers were deported, those abandoned low paying jobs will have to be filled. This will not happen as long as the wages are so low, requiring the raising of the pay scales such that these low paying jobs are no longer low paying. And then the same ripple effect takes over, making economic disaster almost certain regardless of the perspective held by the editorial or discussion.

There is almost no way to project anything good resulting from any of the commonly suggested solutions from either perspective, if you include the ripple effects of those decisions and not just the immediate effects. However, both sides of the equation tend to discuss only the immediate effects and ignore the ripple effects, thereby making their economic projections of their suggestions more palatable, even if deceptive.

So what is America to do?

In 2007, the Heritage Foundation released a major study entitled, "*The Fiscal Cost of Low-Skill Households to the U.S. Taxpayer.*" [SR-12, April 4, 2007] This 53-page comprehensive study attempts to quantify the economics involved in the current status quo. Since it can be presumed from the rhetoric of the "make them citizens" crowd that almost all of these illegal workers accept low incomes because they have low skills, then we can understand the economic effects of making millions of them legal by examining the existing low skill households.

It is documented by the Heritage Foundation that the average low-skill household in America currently receives \$32,138 each year in federal and State benefits. This same low-skill household contributes \$9,689 each year in federal and State income taxes. The difference, \$22,449 each year, is paid by the rest of American households. If the rhetoric that "they only take low-paying jobs that the rest of Americans refuse" can be believed, it can then be projected that similar numbers will be involved in most of the households that would become citizens through the immigration reform bills discussed in Congress. It has been suggested that all illegal workers in this country becoming legal would result in 6 million and as many as 8 million new low-skill households. This would suggest an increased financial burden on all other American households of as much as \$179,592,000,000 each year. It can be successfully argued that the American economy simply cannot withstand the additional burden of \$180 billion in welfare costs.

***So my suggestion is simple. Make all of the illegal men, women and children legal. Then allow each American who files a tax return to make contributions directly to a newly legal household and deduct those contributions from their returns. The family receiving those funds would have to account for the receipt of those funds and the respective State and federal governments would reduce the direct and indirect aid to that family by any amount equal to what it received. And the family donating those funds would see a "revenue-neutral" impact on its annual income tax bill because of the deductible status of those donations.***

This will accomplish several very desirable goals.

First, it would give the American Spirit of compassion a huge opportunity to express itself by allowing a family to directly contribute to one or more specific families and by allowing that family to see the direct effects of its giving.

Second, it would result in clear and tangible benefits to the contributors. One of the many reasons the average American doesn't like paying income taxes is the fact that all the money goes to various agencies and there is little or no tangible results seen by the average taxpayer. This approach would allow the average taxpayer to see tangible results from their tax contributions, and would probably result in even more donations.

Third, the actual amount given is received. Of the \$22,449 “given” to each low-skilled household, the actual amount received by that household is reduced by the huge federal or State bureaucracies administering those funds. Estimates over the years have suggested as much as 90 percent of the monies “given” in aid and other financial contributions is actually absorbed by those bureaucracies in the costs and expenses of administering those funds. With this approach, all of the funds “given” will be directly received by those households.

Fourth, the low-income household can gain some experience in fiscal accountability and financial management. It has been suggested by some that low-income households remain low-income often due to poor financial planning and management. This would be an excellent opportunity for social and religious organizations to offer these low-skilled households free training and education in these terribly important concepts. Perhaps this issue alone would make the largest long-term impact on this demographic.

Last, this would be the closest thing to a revenue-neutral solution offered in recent history. America could absorb millions of new workers only if the federal and State governments do not bear the costs of additional welfare benefits. And Americans would tolerate the absorption of these millions of new workers if they can see the benefits of their reduction in taxes directly and for themselves.

If Americans can see the clear benefit of their taxes and can experience the joy of truly helping others in need, then – possibly – the majority of Americans would tolerate what some would call an invasion.

One thing is certain – most Americans will not tolerate this invasion much longer under the so-called laws introduced in Congress recently, and especially under the new guidelines issued by President Obama.