New American

Written by **William P. Hoar** on May 8, 2017
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Correction Please!

There's More to the Immigration Campaign Than a Border War

Item: *CBS News reported online on March 27, 2017 that Attorney General Jeff Sessions had made "a surprise appearance at the White House press briefing" to urge "sanctuary cities to change their policies, noting that the Department of Justice plans to deny them funding if they do not begin following federal immigration laws."*

As CBS put it: "So-called 'sanctuary cities' offer safe harbor to undocumented immigrants who might otherwise be deported by federal law enforcement officials. The United States has more than 140 sanctuary jurisdictions, either cities or counties, including 37 cities."

Item: *A column entitled "Don't fund an assault on millions of American children" appeared in USA Today for March 28, 2017. It was written by Janet Murguía, president of the National Council of La Raza; she declared that "President Trump's "immigration agenda — one fitfully symbolized by a yet-to-be-built wall — threatens to tear apart American families while leaving a trail of misery across the United States."*

She continued: "What confronts us now is scorched-earth immigration enforcement that will separate as many as 5.7 million American children from their parents. Some of them already have watched as newly emboldened Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents have set upon their families."

Item: Newsweek, *dated April 6, 2017, warns: "Americans will not have a secure food supply until Congress enacts immigration reform that helps agriculture workers and their families acquire legal rights, according to a new study on U.S. agriculture and undocumented immigrants."*

Correction: The left-wing-dominated "debate" over illegal aliens generally lacks a few things, including common sense and truth.

Leaders of major cities both advocate and boast of defying the law of the land, decrying racism.

Meanwhile, the United States has more immigrants, by a wide margin, than any other country in the world.

Illegals get into the country in a number of ways. An estimated 11 million illegals are already in the United States. Not all of those were literal border-jumpers. In fact, legals overstaying their visas have outnumbered those who got in by crossing the border illegally by about 600,000 since 2007, according to a recent publication by the Center for Migration Studies.

They have had little to worry about thereafter. (Whether the public has something to be concerned about is another matter. This is one reason why vetting is important. Last June, John Brennan, the CIA director in the Obama administration, testified that the Islamic State terrorist group "is probably exploring a variety of means for infiltrating operatives into the West, including refugee flows, smuggling routes and legitimate methods of travel.") An illegal alien being caught does not necessarily mean being deported, not by a long shot — because we haven't been enforcing the laws that are on the books.

As summarized recently by Mark Metcalf, a former judge on the Miami Immigration Court:

U.S. immigration courts have the highest failure to appear rate (FTA) of any state or federal courts in the country. Over the past 20 years, 37 percent of all aliens free pending their trials — 918,098 out of 2,498,375 — never showed for court. These federal courtrooms have become as porous as stretches along the Southwest Border that provide much of their caseloads. On average, 46,000 people each year vanished from tribunals created exclusively for the foreign-born.

The lack of enforcement is just part of the reason why former Acting ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) Director John Sandweg could tell the *Los Angeles Times* (after he left office): "If you are a run-of-the-mill immigrant here illegally, your odds of getting deported are close to zero — it's just highly unlikely to happen."

As we write, the California Senate — in a 27-12 vote along party lines, with the Democrats supporting and Republicans opposing — has just backed legislation that essentially calls for obstructing federal law. Among other points, it would mean that police officers would have to ban ICE agents having access to a prisoner even if those agents came to the jail to interview the prisoner.

On the other hand, there are the folks who do their best to enforce the law each day on the frontier. The National Border Patrol Council, a union representing Border Patrol employees, praised Trump's executive action to enforce immigration laws, as well as Trump's proposed wall on the U.S.-Mexican border, saying, "This has been a long day coming."

Here's the germane statute: "Notwithstanding any other provision of Federal, State, or local law, a Federal, State, or local government entity or official may not prohibit, or in any way restrict, any government entity or official from sending to, or receiving from, the Immigration and Naturalization Service information regarding the citizenship or immigration status, lawful or unlawful, of any individual."

That said, as the editors of *National Review* have explained:

[This is] not a blanket prohibition on all policies associated with sanctuary cities. But localities that specifically forbid their officials to provide information to federal immigration authorities are violating the black-and-white letter of the law. A report from the Department of Justice's inspector general last year found that sanctuary cities such as Chicago are running afoul of this statute. It is entirely appropriate for the federal government to make law-enforcement funding conditional on jurisdictions not themselves ignoring the law.

While they will not admit it, the various city leaders are protecting what they perceive as their political base — not the public. And Attorney General Sessions was on target when he pointed out in late March: "When cities and states refuse to help enforce immigration laws, our nation is less safe." As he said, "Failure to deport aliens who are convicted of criminal offenses puts whole communities at risk, especially immigrant communities in the very sanctuary jurisdictions that seek to protect the perpetrators."

One not made safer was Kate Steinle, a young woman shot and killed in San Francisco in 2015 by an illegal alien — a man who had been deported to Mexico five times previously. He was a seven-time felon across multiple states and the subject of an ICE "detainer," meaning that local authorities were flagged to hold him for ICE. The shooter later admitted that he had come to San Francisco because of its "sanctuary" status. Then, following yet another arrest, he was released rather than turned over to ICE, according to the city's policies. That is when Steinle was killed. (The alien has admitted the shooting,

though dubiously claiming it was an accident.)

Though this became a well-publicized case, there are many other criminal aliens whose stories are not as well known. Hans von Spakovsky, a legal authority who often comments on immigration issues, wrote in the *Providence Journal* (March 30) about others, saying: "ICE recently released the first of its weekly reports on cities that have refused to honor ICE detainer warrants, as mandated by President Donald Trump's executive order, 'Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States.' The report details all of the local jurisdictions across the country from Florida to New York to Washington state that refused ICE detainers from Jan. 28 to Feb. 3 and released criminals from their jails rather than turn them over to the federal government for deportation."

The crimes committed by these illegal aliens, in a report covering just one week, observed von Spakovsky, included,

domestic violence, arson, aggravated assault, burglary, forgery, intimidation, possession of a dangerous weapon, intimidation, drug trafficking, sexual assault, homicide and a host of other crimes. This is also no surprise.

There are literally millions of Americans like Steinle who have been victimized by crimes committed by illegal aliens that should not have happened and would not have happened if we actually enforced our immigration laws and if local jurisdictions cooperated with federal authorities instead of trying to obstruct them.

Little wonder that the head of "La Raza" ("The Race"), cited previously, would rather try to change the subject into keeping families together (rather than whether the parents broke the law).

The group headed by Janet Murguía is very influential politically. Indeed, the La Raza president and CEO boasted that she heard from Barack Obama before he told the public in November 2015 about his scheme to shield five million illegal aliens from deportation. She told C-SPAN: "I knew what he was going to say before he said it. I met with the president that day."

The Capital Research Center prepared a detailed dossier on La Raza in February 2015. It mentions not only Murguía but also another former officer from the group, Cecilia Muñoz, who later moved to the Obama White House. As the CRC report indicated, La Raza had reason to be happy that she got the post. Lots of reasons, apparently. Many were green:

Muñoz joined in 2009 as deputy assistant to the president and director of intergovernmental affairs, after receiving an ethics waiver to be hired in spite of Obama's lobbyist ban. In her first year at the White House, taxpayer funds going to La Raza reached $11 million, almost three times the $4.1 million that was doled out to the group the previous year. About 60 percent of that $11 million came from the Department of Labor.

In 2010, … a La Raza affiliate group, Chicanos Por La Causa, received twice as much federal funding under the Obama administration ($18.3 million) after Muñoz was appointed.

The payoffs aren't surprising. Nor should you be surprised that scare stories about "food shortages" being caused by potential deportations are so such bunkum. One such fable appeared on "Quartz," a website owned by Atlantic Media Co.; it was headlined "A Donald Trump presidency could lead to food shortages in the US" (and subtitled "An Empty Stomach," in case we missed the point). Here was the piece's kicker: "It's hard to imagine making America great again with an empty stomach."

The problem with stretching the truth is that sometimes the facts snap back. Farm work, by and large, is big business these days. Kevin Williamson, a correspondent for *National Review*, blew away many of the mythical concerns about illegal aliens and agriculture in an excellent piece last September, in which he cited Pew Research Center findings that showed that only about four percent of the illegal-immigrant population is employed in farming.

Yes, some crops do largely depend on manual labor. And, yes, there are illegals working in such fields. However, enforcing the U.S. government's immigration laws really is not going to cause a famine. Williamson has academic citations to bolster his case, for example:

Applying here the usual caveats that should accompany such studies, an estimate from Iowa State scholars concluded that entirely eliminating the illegal workforce would raise farm wages substantially — by 30 percent in the short term and 15 percent in the long term — but would raise prices only a tiny amount, from 6 percent in the near term to about 3 percent in the long term.

The reason for that is obvious: Labor is a relatively small part of the cost of food, only about 7 percent for labor-intensive crops such as apples and a good deal less than that for others.

Meanwhile, though it didn't get much play in the mainstream media, there actually could be some positive reform on the legal side of the immigration issue. In fact, it was that point that the president emphasized in his address to Congress in March. Said Trump:

The current, outdated system depresses wages for our poorest workers, and puts great pressure on taxpayers.

Nations around the world, like Canada, Australia and many others — have a merit-based immigration system. It is a basic principle that those seeking to enter a country ought to be able to support themselves financially….

Switching away from this current system of lower-skilled immigration, and instead adopting a merit-based system, will have many benefits: it will save countless dollars, raise workers' wages, and help struggling families — including immigrant families — enter the middle class.

La Raza doesn't like that sort of message. We hear that it falls into in a special category: No Más!

— William P. Hoar

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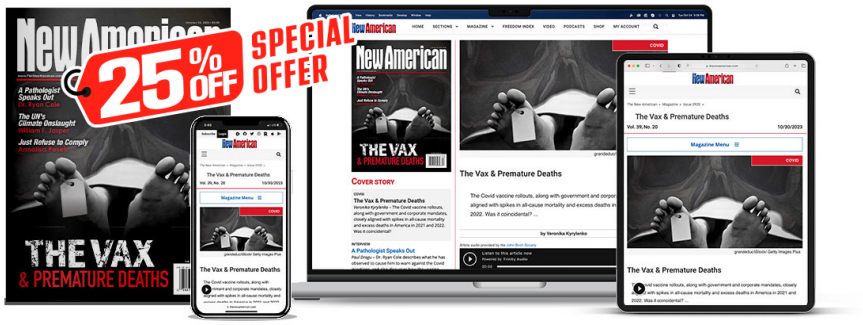

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