



Immigration News Update

Now, he said, he is forced to decide whether to buy groceries or pay the electric bill. His wife, Sirena, has begun delivering mail part-time to help the family afford essentials, but it isn't enough.

Since he was let go, the company he used to work for has hired several people who don't even speak English — all at lower wages. "All I want is to be able to do honest work and support my family, I don't want welfare or handouts," Rudin told *The New American*. "It's terrible that hard-working Americans can't even reap the benefits we're supposed to have in our own country but illegal immigrants get jobs and welfare." He has applied for dozens of jobs only to return later and find immigrants working there instead. A gas station he applied at hired a Jamaican immigrant who had been in the country for two months. At a warehouse where he recently submitted an application, he couldn't even find somebody who spoke English to give his application to. "Why do they do that? It's because immigrants will work for nothing, but I can't, I have a family to feed," he said. "It seems like they are purposely avoiding Americans, even though we're just as qualified or more."



But despite his circumstances, Rudin isn't bitter toward immigrants. "You know, everybody needs a job. I can't hold it against them that they want to come here for a better life," he said. "But it's a real shame when there's a bunch of Americans applying and the company is only hiring foreigners." In Rudin's opinion, the government should stop giving taxpayer money to illegal immigrants, which allows them to undercut the wages of Americans and still subsist, and ensure that foreigners in the United States have entered legally. His story is one that is becoming increasingly widespread throughout America as the economy declines and companies try to cut costs by obtaining cheaper labor.

Everyone's Angles

Pro- and anti-illegal immigration groups are rallying to "fix" what nearly everyone acknowledges is a "broken" system. But with estimates about the number of illegal immigrants in America ranging from 11 million to more than 20 million and growing steadily, except during tough economic times, the effects are becoming increasingly obvious to the man on the street. With companies that want cheap labor and politicians eager to exploit the Hispanic vote on one side, and Americans who oppose more



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immigrants on the other, the unfolding battle is bound to be fierce.

Amnesty advocates argue, among other things, that giving illegal immigrants citizenship would provide more revenue to the government. For example, the Immigration Policy Center argued in a recent report: "The 2007 immigration reform bill, which included a legalization program, would have more than paid for itself through increased tax revenue." But an analysis by the Congressional Budget Office's Center for Budget and Policy Priorities revealed that the legislation would have increased the deficit by billions of dollars, and would have increased over time. An estimate by the Federation for American Immigration Reform estimated the burden on local governments at \$70 billion per year by 2020, without even including assisted housing and other welfare programs.

America's two major labor unions, the AFL-CIO and Change to Win, announced in April that they support legalizing the immigrants already in the country. "The labor movement will work together to make sure that the White House as well as Congress understand that we speak about immigration reform with one voice," said AFL-CIO president John Sweeney in a statement. Critics say the unions, which in the past have not supported amnesty, now want the amnesty so that they can recruit the largely poor blue-collar immigrant base to boost sagging union membership — and union dues by extension. But the unions don't want the legislation to include allowances for large influxes of temporary immigrant labor that the U.S. Chambers of Commerce claim businesses require, temporary workers who would supposedly be reminiscent of migrant labor of old, when poor Mexicans worked here for part of the year and then went home. The unions know that if companies can merely hire temporary migrant workers (who in all actuality will probably never leave), unions won't be able to bargain with companies for better salaries for workers. Ironically, that's virtually the same reason why many American workers don't want amnesty to pass at all.

The Chambers of Commerce have challenged the unions, claiming there is a need for more temporary workers. "If the unions think they're going to push a bill through without the support of the business community, they're crazy," said Randel Johnson, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's vice-president of labor, immigration, and employee benefits. "There's only going to be one shot at immigration reform. As part of the trade-off for legalization, we need to expand the temporary worker program."

According to critics, both the unions and business entities seem to be looking after their own interests instead of the interests of blue-collar Americans and the country as a whole. They argue that the statistics show no new blue-collar workers are needed, and that any legalization of the illegal immigrants already here will penalize less-educated Americans. "When we look at things that we would normally expect to find in a labor shortage: very rapidly rising wages — workers are scarce, wages are bid up — a lot of employers offering their workers benefits like healthcare, we don't find that," explained Steve Camarota of the Center for Immigration Studies. "We find that generally — especially at the bottom of the labor market — wages are stagnant or declining. The share of employers offering benefits is declining."

Of the 7.3 million immigrants who entered the United States between 2000 and 2007, 2.6 million did not even have a high-school diploma. Over half did not have a college education. And illegal immigrants are generally far less educated than those who enter the country legally. Owing to lower levels of education among illegal immigrants, they are usually in direct competition for jobs with America's poorest and most vulnerable workers, leading to increased unemployment.

Making matters worse, the massive illegal-alien presence, according to economists and analysts, depresses wages — especially for lower-income, less-educated Americans. "Labor is a commodity not



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unlike petroleum,” explained former Immigration and Naturalization Service agent Michael Cutler. “The meatpacking industry used to pay 19 dollars an hour and now they pay nine dollars an hour.” With the increased supply of labor, the law of supply and demand demonstrates unequivocally that the price of labor will decrease.

University of Pennsylvania management professor Peter Cappelli called the notion that illegal immigrants do jobs Americans won’t do a “complete myth.” “If illegal workers left the U.S. tomorrow, what would happen? Some people think nobody would do those jobs. If that were to happen, companies would change those jobs, and wages would go up,” Cappelli added. “Yes, companies would hire the people who are not necessarily doing those jobs now. This goes on in every labor market. There are no jobs that we can think of where, over time, work doesn’t get done. It doesn’t happen.”

The costs illegal immigrants impose on Americans through taxpayer subsidies are another alarming component of the problem. The Center for Immigration Studies estimated that in 2002, illegal aliens created a \$10 billion deficit just at the federal level. That represents nearly \$3,000 per illegal immigrant household. The organization also estimated that if amnesty were to become law, that figure would balloon to almost \$30 billion. That was seven years ago, and since then the government and the welfare state have continued to expand as the number of immigrants in America illegally has exploded. A more recent and alarming study by economist and president of ESR Research Edward Rubenstein reveals that “the total economic impact of mass immigration is far higher than the public has been led to believe,” and that the problem is getting worse. According to the study, entitled *The Fiscal Impact of Immigration*, depressed wages caused by the influx of immigrants led to an estimated revenue loss to the government of \$100 billion for fiscal year 2007. Examining 15 federal departments, the study estimated the cost of immigration at \$346 billion — over \$9,000 per immigrant per year. “As daunting as these figures are, they probably understate the problem,” concludes the report summary.

State and local governments also pay a hefty price for illegal immigration, according to various studies conducted on the issue. According to the Federation for American Immigration Reform, an organization that advocates stricter limits on immigration, taxpayers in just the state of California supported illegal-immigrant families to the tune of about \$10 billion in 2004. The study focused on calculating the cost in just three areas: education, medical care, and incarceration. It concluded that each native household in the state pays almost \$1,200 supporting illegal immigrants, noting that if other factors were taken into account the numbers would be even higher.

The large influx of illegal immigrants is not only affecting the country economically, but is having political and cultural effects as well. According to a report issued by the U.S. Joint Forces Command called “Joint Operating Environment 2008,” the U.S. population will be very different by 2030 — especially if immigration continues unimpeded. While pointing out that the extent to which immigrants assimilate will play a major role in America’s future prospects, the report states that “at least 15% of the population of every state will be Hispanic in origin, in some states reaching upwards of 50%.”

If the demographics change this rapidly, and if the new arrivals by and large fail to assimilate — learn the language and gain an appreciation of our heritage of limited government — and disproportionately become dependent on our social-welfare system, then as they become voters (either legally following amnesty or illegally through vote fraud), they will skew the American constituency leftward. Many of them could also be manipulated by self-proclaimed leaders claiming that the Hispanic community is being victimized by white, racist Americans, causing massive social unrest — a theme that is already being pushed by Latino groups such as La Raza and MeCHA.



All for Amnesty

Even though American families (mainly blue-collar families) are being financially harmed by the consequences of the immigration wave on America's economy, President Obama and many Democrats and Republicans continue to push for "comprehensive immigration reform" — otherwise known as amnesty. Essentially, the federal government would grant citizenship to illegal aliens who meet certain requirements and agree to pay a fine. During his presidential campaign, President Barack Obama promised immigrant groups that he would work to have an immigration bill on his desk during his first year in office. He told the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials that immigration reform would be "a priority I will pursue from my very first day."

But with the economy in its present situation, along with Obama's higher prioritization of issues like carbon taxes and healthcare, immigration legislation may have to wait until next year.

Because of all the negative aspects of mass immigration on middle- and lower-income Americans, amnesty or anything remotely close is going to be a tough sell. A 2007 bill granting amnesty to illegal immigrants had strong support from former president George W. Bush, but it still went down in flames after a wave of public outrage descended on Congress. Labeled "Comprehensive Immigration Reform" by supporters, the bill also enjoyed the backing of Senators John McCain and Barack Obama, but to no avail. Critics pointed to similar efforts in the past that they claim only led to more illegal immigration. Such a proposal would still be very difficult to pass despite the larger number of Democratic legislators, according to analysts. Even Obama told Spanish radio host Eddie Sotelo that present conditions would make passage of immigration reform "politically tough, probably tougher now than it was because of the fact that the economy has gotten worse." Perhaps because of this, some lawmakers are introducing smaller proposals that accomplish immigration goals in pieces without attracting headlines.

One such bill was introduced in the U.S. Senate in mid-May by Democratic California Senator Dianne Feinstein, with companion legislation in the House of Representatives. Known as the Agricultural Job Opportunity, Benefits and Security Act (S. 1038), the bill aims to reform the temporary agriculture workers program and offer illegal-immigrant farm employees a path to citizenship. "We've supported immigration reform for years and even though growers are not suffering labor shortages now, we know that as soon as the economy improves we will be back with the same kind of problems we had before," explained California Farm Bureau Federation president Doug Mosebar, who supports the measure.

Another piece of immigration legislation aims to provide a path to legal status and eventually citizenship for illegal immigrants who entered the country before the age of 16, provided they meet certain criteria. The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act would also make them eligible for government aid to attend a college or university.

Since there is always an undercurrent of pressure being put on Congress to ram through amnesty legislation, it pays to know what the potential benefits and consequences of such a law would be. Will it mean locked-down borders in exchange for amnesty, as some proponents claim, or will it merely result in more promises of border enforcement and more defaults on the same? Obama's words send the message that he realizes Americans are tired of being told lies about immigration reform, but his actions are saying that he — like a long string of presidents before him — is going to make many promises about securing the border that he has no intention of keeping.

"If the American people don't feel like you can secure the borders," Obama proclaimed during his April 29 news conference, "then it's hard to strike a deal that would get people out of the shadows and on a



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pathway to citizenship who are already here, because the attitude of the average American is going to be, 'Well, you're just going to have hundreds of thousands of more coming in each year.' " The president has taken some action on U.S. security — ostensibly to prove his sincerity — since taking office, requesting \$27 billion for border and transportation security, an eight percent increase over this year's budget according to officials.

The new money would fund programs such as the addition of about 350 special agents to coordinate efforts with Mexican officials and further integrate intelligence activities on the border. It would also double the amount of resources dedicated to preventing the flow of guns into Mexico and supply the Transportation Security Administration with new X-ray machines. But the new monies aren't intended to stop illegal immigrants from crossing U.S. borders, and they won't be used for it.

At the same time, Obama has also asked for the elimination of some programs that are meant to discourage illegal immigration, including the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP), which reimburses states and counties for the cost of jailing certain illegal immigrants. (In fiscal year 2009, the program doled out nearly half a billion dollars.) He also asked to scrap plans for extending the security fence over large portions of America's southern border. Texas Republican Rep. John Culberson said that eliminating funding for the fence is "more proof that the new administration will not truly secure our borders."

And despite the reported request for increased funds, some analyses of the budget claim that spending on border-security issues is actually going down significantly when compared to the Bush years. It depends on what is counted as "border" issues. The *Houston Chronicle* reports that the administration is only requesting \$779 million for "border security-related expenses," compared to the \$1.9 billion spent by the Bush administration.

Analysts say a focus on security and enforcement by Obama before he calls for all-out amnesty could give him the political cover he needs to legalize the immigrants already in the country illegally. According to White House officials cited in various reports, Obama will call for new enforcement efforts aimed at employers who hire illegal immigrants, rather than at the workers themselves. A cynic would see this as a ploy not only to get amnesty, but to leave the borders open; then, after the immigrants get amnesty, Obama could merely instruct Immigration and Customs Enforcement to stop checking whether employers were complying with the program. He could also simply defund the program, effectively nullifying it. After all, it is likely the government already knows which companies are hiring a preponderance of the illegal immigrants because they file fake Social Security numbers for their illegal workers. The lawbreaking is usually ignored, except, of course, when having a raid on a business suits political ends.

If amnesty does go through, Obama does not intend to take the blame for any future waves of new illegal immigrants. He intends to spread the blame around. A *New York Times* article from April 8, entitled "Obama to Push Immigration Bill as One Priority," cited administration officials who said the president plans to create "working groups" composed of bipartisan legislators and a variety of immigration organizations to begin discussing possible legislation. He wants both sides of the political aisle on board.

And there will be plenty of blame to pass around because the government *will* leave the border open. The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act gave amnesty to about two million immigrants, according to the Center for Immigration Studies. In exchange, Americans were promised a secure border. "This amnesty will give citizenship to only 1.1 to 1.3 million [i]llegal aliens," Ted Kennedy



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promised in 1986. “We will secure the borders henceforth.” He also pledged: “We will never again bring forward another amnesty bill like this.” But the law failed to stem the tide of illegal immigration, as evidenced by the massive number currently present in America. Also apparently forgotten by the government were the broken promises of border security that accompanied the multiple smaller amnesties that have been passed since that time.

Amnesty critics contend that there is no reason to believe the government will uphold its end of the bargain this time around either. In fact, many Americans contend that politicians appear unconcerned even about the fact that a significant portion of illegal immigrants are killing, robbing, and raping Americans — as well as breaking sundry lesser laws on a daily basis.

Available statistics indicate higher rates of criminality among those in the country illegally (statistics that do not include the crime of entering the country illegally) compared to individuals in America legally. According to an article by the Center for Immigration Studies entitled “Crime & the Illegal Alien,” 95 percent of outstanding homicide warrants in Los Angeles are aimed at illegal immigrants. About two-thirds of fugitive felony warrants are also for illegal aliens. According to the department of justice, non-citizens made up 27 percent of the federal prison population in the United States in 2000 (how many of them were here legally is not known). The numbers for state prisons based on DOJ statistics were relatively lower, estimated to be close to seven percent nationwide. Other estimates range much higher — some over 20 percent. But since the government does not actually track the number of illegal immigrants in prison, the accuracy of estimates is difficult to determine. In any case, since they represent an estimated four to six percent of the population, most analyses conclude that illegal immigrants commit more crime than Americans as a group.

Critics complain that illegal immigrants seem to spit on U.S. laws — without getting deported for doing so — and that Americans end up paying the price for government negligence. One person with personal experience in this area is Iowa resident Mona Kilborn. Her mother was killed in a car accident by a felonious illegal immigrant with a fake driver’s license who ran a stop sign. The driver had previously been arrested for possession of methamphetamines and child endangerment, but not deported. “I talked to everyone — ICE, state reps, the mayor, even bishops — to try to find out why the [immigration] law can’t be enforced,” she told *The New American*. “I still haven’t gotten a good answer.” The police chief in her town told her he had no jurisdiction unless it affected the town.

Though the government seems to avoid keeping statistics on illegal-immigrant crime, there’s more than anecdotal evidence that illegal immigrants are responsible for a great deal of crime. Prince William County in Virginia is part of a federal program to fund and train state and local law-enforcement departments to enforce immigration laws. Known as the 287(g) program, it has drawn wide interest from across the country. Since July of 2007, Prince William County has issued over 1,600 detainers under the initiative. From 2007 to 2008, according to the 2008 crime statistics for the county, violent crime plunged 21.8 percent. Over the last two years, violent crime has dropped by almost 37 percent in the county. Other areas of Virginia have seen rates remain stagnant or even increase. The neighboring county witnessed a dramatic upwards spike.

“Of course, our unique policy on criminal illegal aliens is clearly producing results,” explained Corey Stewart, the chairman of the board of county supervisors. “Prince William County stands out amongst the large localities in the region where conditions are actually improving in this worsening economy.” After thanking local law enforcement, he addressed critics’ concerns about the program. “Our innovative policy on criminal illegal aliens has drawn a lot of attention, and with the eyes of the world



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upon them, there has not been on[e] substantiated claim of racial profiling or intolerance among our sworn officers.”

The 287(g) law, a component of Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s ACCESS (Agreements of Cooperation in Communities to Enhance Safety and Security) “umbrella of services and programs,” has been around since 1996. Under the agreement, ICE will partner with certain state and local agencies to provide training by certified instructors, resources, and supervision for enforcing federal immigration laws. Apparently there isn’t enough money to keep up with the demand from state and local governments. But it has been effective so far. According to a report in the *Washington Post*, at least 28,000 illegal immigrants have been ordered out of the country thanks to the program. There are currently only about 63 active partnerships.

Now, due to the perceived abdication by the federal government of its role as protector of America’s heartland, some states are also taking action. Following the lead of places like Prince William County, states like Oklahoma are taking matters into their own hands. In 2007, the state passed HB 1804, a law that prevents illegal immigrants from collecting welfare or obtaining government-issued identification. It also allows state and local law enforcement to verify the status of anybody who is arrested, which can lead to deportation. The law made hiring illegal immigrants into a felony as well. “Many in Oklahoma say Latinos have been leaving by the thousands since the law was passed,” read a 2007 CNN article. Ridding the state of illegal immigrants was the intention of the law, and it appears to be working. According to the Greater Tulsa Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, 15,000 to 25,000 illegal immigrants have already left from Tulsa County alone.

“They will not stay here if there are not taxpayer subsidies and they certainly won’t stay here if they ever encounter one of our fine state and local law enforcement officials,” said Oklahoma State Rep. Randy Terrill, the author of the law. “I’m convinced illegal aliens will not come to Oklahoma, or any other state, if there are no jobs waiting for them.” And he appears to be correct. Legislators in Arkansas have started to complain about the influx of illegal immigrants from Oklahoma and the burden it is adding to the state’s finances. “With Arkansas being a very poor state economically, the concern is whether we can shoulder these expenses,” Arkansas State Rep. Rick Green told *USA Today*, referring to the cost of providing government benefits like healthcare to illegal immigrants coming from Oklahoma.

Yet if government at all levels — including Arkansas — were to follow the lead of Oklahoma or Prince William County, then illegal aliens would not simply self-deport from one state or locale to another but would self-deport out of the country. This step alone should radically reduce illegal immigration, but securing our borders and enforcing our immigration laws are also important solutions that need to be implemented.

But Americans also need to proceed with caution in implementing solutions. Some politicians try to capitalize on public outrage over illegal immigration to sell police-state tactics like national I.D. cards or further integrating American and Mexican law enforcement. These “solutions” should be summarily rejected. Illegal immigration is a big problem, but it can be solved constitutionally. If the people’s representatives know that Americans demand sensible solutions, the pressure will force them to act.



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