



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on July 22, 2010

Libertarian Immigration?

John Stossel believes in free markets. The best result, in almost any situation, is individual liberty — government should stay out of the business of regulating human interactions. There is no doubt that in most cases we have far too much government and far too little freedom of choice. Does that apply to national borders as well? Are immigration laws another form of government regulation of free choices? Stossel is not sure.



America is one of those nations that, historically, has been a land of immigrants. Italians, Germans, Chinese, European Jews, Irish, Mexicans, Poles, and many other peoples have come here in search of freedom. America has welcomed these immigrants, provided only that they obey the laws of our nation and — if they seek more than temporary residence here — become Americans. One of the miracles of our nation is the tens of millions of people from around the world have done just that: they have given up allegiance to the old country and become, instead, new citizens of a new land.

Although America is a welcoming, liberty-loving land quite conscious of its unique role as the refuge of the oppressed and the home of opportunity for those willing to work hard, every nation has not only the right but also the duty to regulate its borders and the people who come cross those borders. The kindest neighbors ask, at least, that you knock and ask permission before coming into their home. America, a kind neighbor, must do no less.

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Those coming to America today, illegally — but sometimes even legally — too often reject the ideals of our nation. Their mindset towards America is rather like President Obama's: The misery of the rest of the world is because of the freedom and prosperity of America, a situation which they wish to change. Hispanic groups like La Raza want to return the border states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California back to Mexico — a corrupt nation that millions of Mexicans want to leave to find a happier life in America.

The elements of successful immigration to America have long been simple and reasonable. English is our language and our nation has expected that all citizens use English, at least primarily. Immigrants were supposed to support themselves and their families. Often this meant several years of menial work with most family members working, but again and again this has proven to be a route to prosperity for



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the immigrants and prosperity for America. Immigrants must be on good conduct, which means not sneaking into the country and not breaking our laws when they are here.

The libertarian position on immigration, which Stossel professes befuddles him, is really not complex. The liberty which is the blessing of America has always been qualified as “ordered liberty.” America was always intended by our Founding Fathers as a land of few laws, but it was never intended as a land of *no* laws — or laws which could be flagrantly violated. Is America a land of immigrants who came here poor and unfree and who became affluent and free American citizens? Of course. But always within the structures of America — its law, its language, its values. Enforcing immigration laws is not an issue of liberty versus oppression. It is simply government doing one of the few duties that it has to its citizens.

Photo: An aerial view of [Ellis Island](#) in Jersey City, N.J. and New York, N.Y.: AP Images



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