

Solving the USA's Illegal Alien Problem

by Roland Foster

Step 1: Understand the problem and its causes, and resolve to solve it rather than ignore it.

Having thousands of people living in our country illegally is a problem. Ignoring it or hoping it will somehow get resolved without our taking corrective action is irresponsible and ludicrous.

The United States is a wonderfully attractive place to live. Having national borders that do not prevent illegal entry is like issuing an invitation to those living in third world poverty: "Come on in. We don't care." And even, in some cases (to our shame), "We welcome laborers who will work for cheap wages."

It is our fault that we have thousands of non-citizens living here illegally. We are much more to blame than they are. We let them come in.

This is a problem for them, but it is also a serious problem for our country. We're paying a heavy cost, both financially and in the divisiveness of the various attempts to deal with the problem without solving it.

The illegal aliens can't fix it. We can, we should, and we must.

Step 2: Prevent others from entering the United States illegally.

Our borders and shores must be made secure. This is so totally obvious it hardly needs mentioning — except that if we don't make it part of the solution, we will never fix the problem.

Here's what should happen when someone enters the United States illegally:

1. The person should be stopped and detained by law enforcement. Detention facilities should be able to house children with their parents.
2. An immediate database search should be made for any outstanding arrest warrants in the United States, the person's country of origin, and the entry country. (Yes, it would take effort and money to make this possible. Do it.)
3. If no warrants are found, the person should be returned as quickly as possible to the country from which he or she entered the USA.
4. If there are any arrest warrants, arrangements should be made to extradite, if necessary, and hand the person over to the warrant-issuing authority.
5. There should not be any exceptions. If there is a valid reason for entry (e.g. for political asylum), that entry can and must be made legally.

Step 3. Define a Simple path for almost all to stay and become citizens.

Here is a possible plan:

1. From the date this program becomes law, every foreigner living in the United States illegally will have one month (or two — whatever is reasonable) to register as a “Registered Resident Alien.” Those who register will become exempt from deportation, except for criminal cause. Those who do not register within the registration period will at that time become liable to be arrested and deported.
2. After the registration deadline, Registered Resident Aliens will have one year to complete the usual requirements for becoming United States citizens — the same ones required of legal immigrants — and be sworn in as citizens. After being sworn in, they will be legal citizens, just the same as if they had come into the United States legally.
3. If a Registered Resident Alien wants to remain as a legal visitor, but not become a citizen, the path and requirements and limitations for that would be the same as for a legal visitor.
4. There can be no “undocumented aliens” — anyone who cannot follow a path for being in the United States legally must not be allowed to stay.

Note that this process removes the rationale for “sanctuary” cities and states. The only persons who will still need sanctuary are those who are wanted as criminals.

Adjudication of Exceptions.

Of course, not every situation can be resolved so straightforwardly; a small percentage will need special handling. Here is a suggestion for handling exceptional cases:

Set up a “Regional Adjudication Council” (or use another name) in two or more regions where there are large concentrations of illegal aliens. Have each council consist of, say, nine individuals: three selected by Homeland Security, three selected by Health and Human Services, and three selected by the major advocacy group in that region.

Each Adjudication Council may make certain exceptions — for example, a person in a nursing home may be given a permanent “Registered Resident Alien” status as a way to remain here legally. The Council would follow written guidelines and work with a list of exception situations. They might refer a few unexpected cases to a national committee set up for the purpose.

Conclusion

This is not the only possible solution, but at least it proposes one solution — more than I have seen from any other source.