

On The Issues



ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION / BORDER SECURITY

Being the grandson on my father's side of a Yugoslavian immigrant and a student of history, I support immigration and the role it has played in making the United States of America the great nation that it is today. However, for any nation to maintain its sovereignty and identity, that immigration must be controlled and open to people that want to become part of that country, not just come here for personal gain. We want citizens that are committed to truly integrating into our society, not that want to remake our society into their culture. Above all, we want immigrants to respect our laws and contribute to our nation in the open, not in the shadows. This approach is best for immigrants and for current citizens. Hence, while I am a proponent of immigration, it has to be legal immigration.

To deal with the millions of illegal immigrants that are already here, and the new ones that enter this nation each year, I have developed the following steps. I believe this plan, or one very similar to it, should be enacted as soon as possible to deal with the problem of illegal immigration. This approach, I believe, is better not only for America but for those who want to become part of our nation as well.

Remember, if you have suggestions to make this proposal better I would love to hear them. Please let us know what you think.

Step #1

We must secure our borders. It is vital that the flow of illegal immigrants be stopped immediately. Doing so will decrease the smuggling of drugs and humans significantly. We must use all means at our disposal, including completing the already mandated border fence and virtual fences, increasing the size of our U.S. Border Patrol (and removing rules that restrain them from doing their jobs properly), and utilizing the military to supplement the Border Patrol in high-risk areas.

We are one of the few countries in the world that does not use its military to provide border security. I think this needs to be re-evaluated. Why don't we have Immigration and Customs officials handle the legal crossings and the military handle the hundreds of miles of unpopulated borders? Someone crossing the border illegally, meeting military personnel and being placed in a military holding area when caught, is facing a very different situation compared to being arrested by the border patrol.

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We also need to simplify the E-verify system by combining it with all of the other state and federal registrations employers are required to make every time they hire a new employee. Today I have to notify three different agencies when I hire an employee. Why don't we have each state make one master registration that they can then use to verify employee eligibility? If they determine something is not correct then they can come investigate. The employer is then not expected to be the police force. Some employers might still try to hire illegal aliens by not reporting them as employees. This would need to be prosecuted vigorously to discourage this from happening.

Step #2:

Benefits. No Social Security for those who have entered the nation illegally. No Medicare. No free ride on emergency room visits. The same card used to get a job should be presented at the hospital. Someone who goes to the emergency room for non-emergency treatment but can't pay will have their wages garnished to pay for at least some of the charges.

Step #3:

The United States was built by immigrants and should continue to welcome immigrants that want to become Americans legally. We must simplify this process and make it both easier and faster.

Solution: Allow prospective immigrants to pay for faster service. Instead of paying a smuggler, why not charge an application fee to speed up the legal process? As long as they have a job, are law abiding and are willing to assimilate, they are welcome to come and make a life here. Note also that resident aliens would not be eligible for any federal benefits such as Medicare, Medicaid, SCHIP, or food stamps.

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Step #4:

Responsibility. If someone is here illegally they must:

- 1) Go home and apply for legal status to enter the country (see Step #2 if you want to speed up the process), or
- 2) Come out of the shadows and register with the government by a set date. This would allow people to stay in the U.S. IF they pay a significant fine and registration fee (to pay for the new overhead of registration). This fee should be in addition to the "quick processing fee" of Step #2). In addition to the fine for being in the U.S. illegally and the registration fee, they would be charged back taxes and interest.

If they can't pay, the government will garnish their wages. If they don't have a job, they will be fingerprinted, retinal scanned, and sent back to their home country. They can then reapply for citizenship through regular channels. If they commit a felony, including continuing to work under another identity to avoid wage garnishment, or are found to be a felon, they will be deported and become ineligible for citizenship in the future.

Let's pause here and clarify something – this is NOT amnesty. I am against amnesty. Amnesty by definition means no penalty – past offenses are overlooked and pardoned. –It essentially rewards them for their bad behavior. I am unilaterally opposed to the concept of amnesty. In the same way that some law breakers commit crimes and can face consequences other than jail time, I think in certain limited cases some illegal aliens can face consequences other than deportation. Those that pay the penalties would not become citizens immediately. Coming forward will only allow them to go to the back of a very long line for citizenship – currently about a seven-year line. While they are here and are not citizens, they would also not be eligible for citizen's benefits such as Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

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Paying the fines, back taxes, and interest is reparation for the wrong they have done. It also helps increase the government's revenue, which would help offset the costs of so many illegal aliens.

Step #5:

Enforcement. In addition to enforcing our current immigration laws, I believe we must enact a law or laws to impose stricter punishment for those in the United States illegally. Unless they have chosen to go through one of the processes outlined in Steps 3 and 4 above, someone caught in the U.S. illegally should be fingerprinted, retinal scanned, deported, and ineligible for U.S. citizenship in the future. These individuals should never be allowed back into the United States.

Step #6:

Take away the reason so many come. Change the 14th amendment (or obtain a more accurate ruling from the Supreme Court on this matter) such that if a child is born after a certain date and their parents were not here legally (or do not apply for and receive U.S. citizenship), that child is not a U.S. citizen. This will immediately eliminate the "Anchor Baby" problem associated with deporting illegal immigrants as well as eliminate the draw for pregnant illegal immigrants to come into the U.S. to have children. Citizenship, as stated in the 14th amendment, would be for people "born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof". If a citizen of another country is here illegally they are not subjecting themselves to the jurisdiction of the United States.

I am sure that such a law would be immediately appealed to the Supreme Court. If the law is upheld – great. If not, then we would need to amend the constitution to clarify the 14th amendment to solve this problem once and for all.