

Immigration: How About a Simple Solution?

Whenever the topic of immigration reform comes up, I begin to feel myself torn between the two opposing camps. For better or worse, I've had contact with individuals on both sides of the debate who not only make a persuasive argument, but more importantly are sincere in their beliefs. What follows is an attempt to create a middle ground whereby we can move forward toward a lasting agreement.

Talk of adding more fences along the border is quite popular among those who oppose illegal immigration. When I think about fences, or devices whose purpose is to stem the flow of illegals, a few things come to mind: a) the politically-connected contractor is going to make beaucoup money on a most certainly over-priced government project; b) it's time to get into the earth digging business, for we know that tunnels will soon be built; c) the Sinclair Lewis novel, *It Can't Happen Here*.

What does a novel written in 1935 have to do with illegal aliens? Well, in that novel, fascists take over the U.S. government (imagine that) and lock down the borders to prevent people from escaping. The main character, who lives in Vermont, is unable to flee into Canada. In time, he joins the resistance, a move that subsequently lands him in a concentration camp. Point being, the fences that keep people out, also keep people in. If Mr. Lewis is correct, our fence-building fascination may cost many people their lives when the powers-that-be decide to round up all the subversives.

What if we could allow people to exercise their beliefs concerning this touchy topic without resorting to the heavy hand of government?

This would be possible if privately run organizations were established that certified businesses as employers of legal citizens. At a glance, consumers would know if their dollar was providing employment for American workers or not, and shop accordingly. No need for expensive border fences, intrusive identification documents, and haphazard I.N.S. raids.

In order to illustrate my idea in practice, we need to create a hypothetical organization. Let's call it Legal American Workers (LAW). A business would invite LAW in to certify their establishment as only employing legal Americans. Once this status is obtained they would be allowed to display a LAW emblem on their storefront, advertising materials, products, etc.

While Mom and Pop businesses often come to mind with such a scheme, we should not forget the lucrative field of government contracts. Local government contracts could contain a provision that requires contractors to be certified by such an organization as LAW. In time, as the idea grows, State and Federal contracts could follow suit.

An important point I'd like to stress is that an organi-

zation like LAW mustn't be governmentally affiliated; the government is simply too corrupt and too inept. There is a reason why *Consumer Reports* is trusted to provide reliable product reviews. If they lie their business will suffer and quite possibly fail; when the government lies, a bunch of fingers are pointed and the offending agency has their budget increased.

To prove my point, consider the fraud within the EnergyStar program that was documented in the *New York Times* article, "Audit Finds Vulnerability of EnergyStar Program." The Government Accountability Office submitted bogus products that were given the EnergyStar label. How bogus? Try a "gasoline-powered alarm clock" or an "air purifier that consisted of an electric space heater with a feather duster pasted on top." Yet, the program keeps on tickin'.

Another, albeit obvious, reason to avoid government association is to prevent invasions of privacy. If possible, LAW should not maintain permanent records of employees at any business since this information could be used by the IRS, NSA, FBI, etc. So, if you don't have it, the government can't force you to give it up.

Ideally, we need to bring home all the American troops stationed around the world, along with the various unaccountable intelligence agencies (yes, I'm talking about you, CIA), that are either directly or indirectly (through support of the participants) causing conflicts leading to an ever-increasing displacement of civilians, ie. Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, et al. Creating civil wars in foreign countries, then complaining about the resultant refugees seems pretty asinine to me.

Yet, as long as the CIA can profit from the sale of illegal drugs (thanks to the exorbitant prices of these drugs due to them being prohibited) we can expect a steady flow of displaced peoples for years to come. Remember that this is not some distant problem; we are helping to pay for the drug war in Mexico that has resulted in thousands of deaths.

Ignoring the issue will eventually lead to such undesired outcomes as mass deportations or violence as unemployed citizens find themselves without work in their own country. Throwing money at the problem in the form of unemployment benefits may delay the inevitable, but in the process it will encourage dependency on government assistance, not to mention further debase our currency that has already been so awfully abused at the hands of the privately-owned Federal Reserve.

There will be those who will decry this idea as too simplistic. This I take as a compliment. For it is in the idea's simplicity that lies its greatest strength.

~ Jason Gerhard