



Illegal Aliens

Illegal immigration has become a particularly divisive topic at the national level all the way down to the local level. Last week saw the Horry County Council vote down the Horry County Lawful Employment Ordinance that had been proposed by Councilman Foxworth and backed only by Councilman Ryan.

To be sure, this is not an easy issue and is not one that should be undertaken lightly. Passions regarding this issue run high on both sides.

Today, there are billions of peoples throughout the world in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe who live in poverty, fear, and oppression. Many of these peoples yearn for freedom and the basic liberties that we here in America often take for granted. To them, America is a beacon and offers hope of a better way of life. They seek freedom from oppression and the prospect of a better life than an existence in a land where there is no hope and no chance to better themselves. They seek opportunity in America—opportunity to live, work, prosper, build a life, raise a family, and have rights. These opportunities are not available to them at home and never will be. Our forefathers came here for that very same reason. And now, centuries later, millions of peoples throughout the world still seek America's shores for the same reasons and look to us, the land of opportunity. Many are willing to risk everything, including their lives, just for the chance to get here in hopes of finding a better way of life. And whilst many have tried to come here through the appropriate legal means, more still illegally enter and live in the United States—disproportionately utilizing our resources but shouldering far less of the burden than our own citizens.

America's history is teeming with the contributions made by immigrants who came to this great land legally, became citizens, and gave back to our society and system. Our founding fathers and many generations since then built this nation with their blood, sweat, and tears, making sacrifices along the way so that we could enjoy the freedoms and opportunities that we have today. Millions of hardworking Americans keep that spirit and those ideals alive. Our citizens work and pay taxes so that we can maintain our infrastructure, further our education system, and support the institutions that set America so far ahead of other nations.

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Those who choose to enter and live in this country illegally are extended the same privileges and sometimes even more than our citizens whose financial burden is far greater. These illegal aliens use our hospitals as primary healthcare providers, often at no cost, whilst millions of Americans are uninsured. Their children attend the same public schools as those of the taxpayers. They utilize the same public services as other taxpayers but do not contribute their fair share of the financial cost.

Many suggest that we should offer no services to illegal aliens. To say that we should turn our backs on our fellow man when in need of medical attention, just because they are illegal aliens, is to strip ourselves of our own humanity. But to offer the same services—protection and caring for the injured or weak or sick—is not to say that we extend to illegal aliens all rights reserved for citizens of this country. Here, they should not be extended the same privileges as American citizens who have been blessed to have been born here and whose ancestors have sacrificed much or who have legally immigrated here and taken the oath of citizenship.

Our federal government over the last several decades has failed to stem the tide of illegal entrants through our porous borders, predominantly with Mexico. Now, we have over twelve million illegal aliens here in America draining our resources and taxing the good nature of our people. Whilst the federal government can talk about securing our borders and preventing additional illegal aliens from entering, there is no easy way to deal with those who are already here. A massive deportation scheme, as many would like, would be not only logistically unfeasible but would also set a dangerously destabilizing precedent in America. Such a scheme could turn Americans into modern day Gestapo agents searching for illegal aliens of a specific ethnicity. The thought of a rapid degeneration of American society to such a point as to compromise those liberties, those ideals, and those values that America has fought to preserve throughout our history as a great nation is frightening.

Therefore, we must resolve ourselves to the fact that these illegal aliens are likely going to stay. Our energies now must be focused on how best to adapt to this. We must show no sympathy for those illegal aliens who are here and who have chosen to engage in criminal conduct. We must ensure that those who stay and work are in the system and paying their fair share of taxes. We must ensure that

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those who elect to stay are treated fairly and that those who go through the full citizenship process are granted the same rights as all of America's other citizens. And in so doing this, we must be humble, recognizing that ours is the envy of the world and that we are fortunate to have been blessed us with life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as a birthright. And we must sympathize with those who still strive to be a part of the greatness of America—those who yearn for freedom and a new way of life. And we must take satisfaction from those who do get to taste the greatness of America and who help to make our nation stronger.

But cohabitation is a two way street. But in this cohabitation, we must not allow our identity as America to be corroded by the waves of immigrants seeking our shores. To do this is to set us on a path of gradually forgetting who we are and eroding the greatness of America that has been built over the generations and that has come at great cost. Let us preserve and protect this. Those who are here and elect to stay or become citizens must integrate into our society. This involves learning and speaking English, recognizing and accepting our customs, respecting our laws, etc. We as Americans are not obligated to accommodate foreign speaking individuals. The National Anthem is to be sung in English, the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag is the only pledge that should be in our schools and it is to be in English, and government business is to be conducted in English. A respect for America, what it stands for, and our identity as Americans is crucial for the cohabitation to be successful and will in all likelihood help Americans more readily accept these newcomers to our society.

Whilst securing our borders and crafting a comprehensive immigration policy are indeed duties of the federal government, the issue of illegal aliens is clearly an issue for all levels of government. All change and all movements must start somewhere. As movement at the federal level is often quite slow, state and local governments can help push the process along with the passage of their own ordinances. But if we the people do nothing, if we stand idle and allow illegal aliens to flood our shores, we should replace Old Glory with a white flag.