

Now is the time to get immigration reform passed. Almost everyone believes our present immigration laws are broken and need fixing. A sensible reform of our policies can solve most of the problems that cause us concern about having 12 million persons undocumented and lacking a reasonable approach to legal migration.

First, immigration reform has to provide us with a system that reflects our basic values as a nation. We are largely a just and hospitable people who believe humane treatment for all, therefore any immigration system has to meet that requirement.

Second, we know that we cannot deport 12 million persons, the present estimate of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. It is impractical for many reasons. Perhaps most important is that it is inhumane. We believe in families and honor them. Many undocumented now have children and spouses who are citizens and deportation threatens and disrupts families. Some undocumented persons were babies or young children brought here by their parents. For them the U.S. is their home. They have grown up in our neighborhoods, often times excelled in local schools and sports, and filled our churches, mosques and temples with new vitality. Most express a willingness and desire to serve in the armed forces.

Deportation also would cost us a fortune. Estimates are that deportation would cost the economy \$2.6 trillion over 10 years. That does not include the \$206 billion expense to deport 12 million persons over the next five years.

Third, providing a pathway to legalization (not citizenship) for undocumented persons will result in a number of positives.

1. While many undocumented persons do pay taxes through false social security numbers or Temporary Identification Numbers issued by the IRS for that purpose, many do not. Making undocumented persons legal would bring them into the tax system and they will pay social security and income taxes. They will be able buy homes, cars, and many other commodities that are difficult for them to buy under the present system.

2. Each immigrant can have a driver's license adding to public safety. Police will have a way of identifying drivers and tracking their record. States will have a boom in driver's license fees. But most important is that the economy will grow about \$1.5 trillion in the next 10 years. Compare that to the loss resulting from deportation

3. Families will be kept together. Children will not lose their mothers or fathers or, in some cases, both. Undocumented children will not be returned to a home they never knew.

Fourth, reform of the worker VISA that makes it possible for migrant workers to come to the U.S. work for a while and then return home is essential. Our economy is elastic so our work force needs to be. In good times we need more

workers than we have. In bad times we need fewer. Many of our documented workers never intended on staying, but our system discourages them from returning home, thus they become unintentional immigrants.

Fifth, we need reform so we can stop waisting billions on border enforcement. Instead of looking for drug traffickers, terrorists, and human traffickers, our Border Patrol spends too much time dealing with persons who want nothing more than to work and send money home to family.

Why is that necessary? In 1994 NAFTA was passed creating the unintended consequence of tremendous economic hardship for Mexican farmers resulting in desperation. They flocked to the border factories. Failing to find work there, they entered the U.S. Then we began building larger, stronger, more extensive fences on the border and hiring more border patrol agents. Before that immigration across the border was nearly level and quite modest. Afterwards it skyrocketed as have the costs to our national budget. We presently spend \$18 billion on border enforcement money that could be better spent on education, health, or infrastructure.

Finally, a policy for legal migration will end the deaths. Because of enhanced enforcement, deaths in the deserts of the southwest have skyrocketed. In 1993 there were just 23 deaths. In 2007, there were 827. Each of these persons is someone's child, mother or father. These deaths are men, women, and children who out of economic desperation dared to try to come to our country not because they hate us but because they admire us.