

## Immigration Politics

### Sifting out the Political Weasels, Dunces, and Jellyfish

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The United States needs an immigration policy that benefits Americans. What we have is an immigration policy—or rather a deliberate failure to enforce immigration laws—that benefits illegal immigrants, businesses that profit from hiring cheap foreign labor instead of Americans, and politicians who want to change our society into a big-government-dependent welfare state.

The businesses that relentlessly lobby Congress, state legislatures, and county commissions to assure they can continue to profit from paying lower-than-competitive wages and benefits at the expense of American workers and their families contribute hundreds of millions of dollars to political campaigns each year. These businesses and their national associations usually claim to be advocates of free enterprise, but in reality they are violating the very ethical and patriotic principles necessary to sustain and strengthen a free economy. They are what economist Thomas J. DiLorenzo calls “political entrepreneurs,” a breed of business leaders who gain competitive advantage by political influence rather than innovative methods, technology, service, and products. In the process, they trample their more honest and patriotic business competitors and put off the inevitable necessity for innovation to keep the American economy strong. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the most powerful and influential of these lobby groups. These lobby groups and the politicians they influence are the main reason that our immigration laws have been only nominally enforced for a decade. They are the principle reason that American workers have not prospered even as their productivity increased and the top line of the economy looked good. These business lobbies and their political allies are a large part of why we now have fifteen million unemployed Americans yet tolerate maintaining eight million illegal immigrant workers in the country.

On the political side, most liberal Democratic politicians have figured out that more liberal immigration standards, bigger immigration numbers (legal or illegal), and especially amnesty, will mean more social-welfare-oriented liberal voters in the future, enough to permanently change the American electorate from center-right to left-center. Unfortunately, many analytically challenged Republicans don't get it. Others, influenced by financial support from the cheap labor lobby, have deceived themselves into believing that repeating the mantra “America is a nation of immigrants” is an adequate immigration policy for the Twenty-first Century. They turn their backs on the harm being done to most Americans and the ultimately nation-destroying consequences of hiding foolish and corrupt immigration policies under flowery platitudes and politically correct bromides.

So how do we cut through the platitudes, bromides, weasel words, and issue-avoidance dances to identify political candidates who are informed, intelligent, and courageous enough to fight for immigration policies that will best serve the American people and preserve our heritage of liberty? Based on more than ten years of study and writing on immigration, I have prepared a brief anti-weasel checklist that also sorts out the uninformed and misinformed.

1. Securing our borders is necessary but not sufficient to stop illegal immigration.

Almost every political candidate, no matter how liberal or out-and-out Marxist, says they will

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enforce border security. Hence addressing border security alone is a common way of dancing around important immigration issues without really saying anything. Despite everybody saying they are for border security, nothing ever really gets done. If the candidate only addresses border security, he or she is either hiding a liberal position or is not well enough informed to be elected to high public office.

2. The most effective way to stop illegal immigration is to turn off the employment magnet by enforcing immigration law at the workplace. If the magnet is turned off, few will come, and most of those here will go home on their own ticket. If you want real reform, do not vote for candidates who do not clearly support workplace enforcement and programs like E-Verify to screen out illegal work applicants.

3. Most illegal immigrants do not sneak across the border. Almost half simply violate their work, tourist, or student visas and become illegal. A common method of illegal entry is to come as a legal agricultural guest worker and then skip out to take a higher paying construction job. Good candidates for public office should be willing to support a system of monitoring visas and enforcing the law against those who have violated our trust.

4. Beware of candidates who espouse guest-worker programs. Roughly two American workers are displaced for every three legal or illegal foreign workers hired. The economics remain the same regardless of whether the workers are illegal aliens or guest workers. Importing cheap foreign labor also drives down American wages and leaves the taxpayers to pick up the healthcare, welfare, education, and crime bills. The employers profit, but American workers and taxpayers suffer. In 1997, after several years of intensive study, the Joint Congressional Commission on Immigration Reform adamantly rejected guest-worker programs. Past guest-worker programs exacerbated rather than relieved immigration problems. The Commission specifically stated that a guest-worker program would be "a grievous mistake" and cited the powerful harmful impacts on American workers and taxpayers in the past. A distinguished member of the Commission, Rev. Theodore Hesberg, President Emeritus of Notre Dame, summarized his remarks to the joint committees with this conclusion: "We do not think it wise to propose a program with potentially harmful consequences to the United States as a whole."

5. Prior to the 1986 amnesty, legal immigration averaged only 300,000 per year, and the rate of illegal immigration was much lower. Now we are averaging over 500,000 illegal immigrants per year and over 1,000,000 legal immigrants, a total of 1,500,000 per year. According to Harvard labor economist, George Borjas, himself a Cuban immigrant, a total immigration level of about 500,000 per year is the maximum that will not hurt American workers, taxpayers, and their families.

Yet many politicians and political candidates want to open the immigration door wider! They apparently have no concept of the social and economic burden they are putting on American families, communities, and taxpayers. This also plays into the hands of those who would flood the country with legal cheap foreign labor and ready socialist voters. Clear thinking rather than sentimentality must prevail or we will lose our country. Failing to recognize the facts and future

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consequences of too much legal immigration is inexcusable. Does anyone believe that sentimentality should trump economic reality or that we need more political jellyfish in public office? We need to say "no" to special-interest greed and brainless sentimentality. The times call for realism and courage, not spineless denial.

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6. Solving the illegal immigration problem is not just a matter of balancing law and compassion for ten to twenty million illegal immigrants. What about the millions of American workers they have displaced? What about their families? What about the 130 million U. S. workers whose real wages have been depressed by our failure to put our own people ahead of cheap labor profits? What about the crime victims? Yes, we are importing higher crime rates! What about taxpayers? Does being a taxpayer make you fair game for continuous robbery? Where is compassion for law-abiding Americans who are suffering because of illegal immigration?

7. Watch out for amnesties that politicians refuse to call amnesties because of some gimmick or subterfuge. As if small fines and paying back a portion of unpaid taxes could make up for years of robbing American workers, honest employers, and taxpayers of their daily bread! Are people who have committed forgery, fraud, identity theft, and tax evasion really good candidates for American citizenship? Amnesty for ten to twenty million illegal immigrants would probably be the end of a once-great American Republic and a triumph for greed, corruption, and totalitarian socialist government.

8. Watch out for those who say we have no choice but amnesty. They disingenuously raise the specter of rounding up millions of people and shipping them out in railroad boxcars. This is all nonsense. Simply applying immigration enforcement at the workplace would reduce illegal immigration to pre-1987 levels within months, and in a few years most of those already here would pack up and go home at their own expense. The relatively small remainder could be cleaned up with consistently applied normal enforcement over a number of years.

9. What does the candidate say about local government and law enforcement involvement in immigration problems? The typical cop-out is "that's a federal issue." Technically, immigration is a Constitutional responsibility of the Federal Government. But local is where the rubber hits the road in immigration. Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act is an indispensable opportunity for cooperation between local law enforcement and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials. Political candidates who are not gravely concerned about the public safety implications of illegal immigration should not be trusted with public office. Illegal immigrant sanctuaries are a public danger and cowardly abdication of moral and civic responsibility.

10. Beware of analytically defective or disingenuous special interest economics. Importing poverty does not increase national per capita wealth. Importing predominantly unskilled labor does not increase per capita wealth. Displacing American workers with illegal immigrants is not job creation. For immigration to be positive, it usually has to raise the average skill and brainpower of a nation. New technology requires more skills and brainpower. That leaves less genuine need for unskilled labor.

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Most Congressional candidates have their views on important issues posted on their websites. I strongly recommend reading them before you vote. Hopefully, this short essay will help you sift out the political weasels, dunces, and jellyfish and find candidates who are informed, patriotic, courageous, and wise.

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