

## **LET THE SUN SET ON SECTION 245-I**

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### **Body**

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THE reversion of immigration law to pre-1994 status by the **sunset** of **Section 245-I** (Opinion, Oct. 1) was planned when that law was passed. It was intended that the effects of the law would be evaluated after a trial period of three years. The trial period is over.

Allowing entrance to this country without legal documents and without background checks has resulted in the arrival of many illegal aliens. In 1995 and 1996 some 345,000 people used this loophole. In 1997, the INS is expecting nearly 200,000 illegal aliens to use **245-I**. If this law was meant to facilitate legalization of a few people who mistakenly arrived ahead of formal permission, it has been abused on a grand scale. This temporary provision was subversive of our immigration laws on its very face: Come illegally, pay \$1,000, stay to become legal.

It is time to **sunset** a law which has attracted hundreds of thousands people to enter this country illegally.

-- Raymond R. White

Palo Alto

YOU got some facts seriously wrong in your story "New law creates tough choices" (Page 1A, Sept. 24).

You state that the law adopted last year changed the rules in mid-stream because, "Until now, an illegal immigrant who was arrested and deported could enter legally at any later date." The fact is that prior to adoption of the new law, there was a five-year penalty to legal admission for anyone deported.

Other information supplied by immigration rights advocates is also wrong. No one who has already applied for adjustment of status under **section 245-I** faces new penalties under the new law. And no one who is ineligible for legal residence now has been "told by the government that it was perfectly OK to stay in the country while their papers were processed," as you state.

The spouses of some former illegal aliens who were given amnesty under the 1986 law may fit that description, but they were explicitly excluded from the provision of the new law and have nothing to be concerned about.

Your article also obscures the point of the new measures. They are designed to discourage illegal entry by inserting meaningful penalties in the law against those who willfully and flagrantly violate our immigration laws.

-- John Martin

Federation for American

Immigration Reform

Washington D.C.

THE temporary legislation known as **245-I** allows illegal aliens to pay \$1,000 and stay in the country while they supposedly try to get permission to stay. It does not weed out dangerous criminals, gang members or terrorists. It

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allows illegal aliens to just disappear and not show up for further hearings. There are remedies for special cases, but allowing it for everyone just lets the world know that the U.S. is not serious about protecting its sovereignty.

-- C.A. Joyal

Los Gatos

Good-sense drug policy

HAVE the Swiss lost their clock-ticking minds? How could over 70 of Swiss voters (Page 12A, Sept. 29) approve their government's distribution of heroin to addicts? Why have they accepted storefronts where addicts walk in off the street, sit down and inject illegal drugs under medical supervision? After a decade of experience, how could the Swiss vote to embrace needle exchange programs in their beautiful and notoriously clean communities?

What could the Swiss be thinking? Well, possibly enough of them actually looked at the carefully conducted research on two-year heroin prescription pilot programs. The research demonstrates not only dramatically improved health and social integration for the hard-core addicts, but also a greater than 75 percent reduction in drug-related crime by those enrolled in the programs.

The Swiss are a famously practical people. Maybe we could learn something from them. But first, we must face the fact that America has the worst drug problem in the world because it has the worst drug policy in the world.

-- Joey Tranchina

Redwood City

Headwaters coverage

I was very disappointed with your coverage of the rally to save the Headwaters forest (Page 3B, Sept. 15). Not only did your headlines and photo captions make the rally look like a big bunch of hippies "chanting and beating drums," you failed to give any more than the bare minimum information about the issue itself.

While there are many people on the North Coast who ignorantly support anything the timber industry says or does and resent any opposition to logging, this year's rally focused more than ever before on working with residents and timber industry workers. More and more people whose paychecks come from timber companies and even Pacific Lumber are starting to realize the foolishness of logging Headwaters and of ruthless industrial logging practices in general.

It would be nice to see serious coverage of the Headwaters forest issue in the future.

-- Nikolai Barca-Hall

Los Gatos

Flawed pesticide study

The Mercury News' report on pesticide use in California (Page 1B, Sept. 18) failed to point out the superficiality of the study entitled "Rising Toxic Tide."

The study highlighted a jump in pesticide usage from 1991-95, but it ignored the key fact that most of the increase occurred in one year -- when a drought ended and wet weather encouraged more acreage, and an increase in pests.

The study's sponsors needlessly inflamed public fear with references to large increases in "cancer-causing pesticides." Yet both the study and the Mercury News ignored the fact that more than a third of the increased poundage came from a natural chemical -- sulfur -- favored by organic and conventional farmers alike.

The study also demeaned work by Cal/EPA's Department of Pesticide Regulation to develop reduced-risk strategies in pest control. These programs have won international recognition since 1973. In the coming year, DPR will award more than \$1.5 million in grants for environmentally-friendly projects on farms and in urban areas.

-- James W. Wells

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Director, Department of  
Pesticide Regulation  
Sacramento  
Killers' victims

SUSAN Duarte claimed that I made "the consummate argument against the death penalty" in remarks regarding a recent prosecution of gang members for seven San Jose murders, including the execution of a 21-year old mother (Letters, Sept. 25).

My actual comment, which was not quoted in its entirety in the original news story, was: "These people (murder victims) . . . did not deserve to die at the hands of the gang."

Unrepentant serial killers are far more than "annoying folks," as Ms. Duarte terms them.

-- Catherine Pozos Constantinides  
Deputy district attorney,  
Santa Clara County

## Notes

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LETTERS, E-MAIL & FAXES

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