

## **Border Officers To Weigh Pleas Of Illegal Aliens**

The New York Times

April 19, 1987, Sunday, Late City Final Edition

Copyright 1987 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section 1; Part 1, Page 20, Column 1; National Desk

**Length:** 880 words

**Byline:** By ROBERT PEAR, Special to the New York Times

**Dateline:** WASHINGTON, April 18

### **Body**

---

The Government has named **Border** Patrol agents, investigators, deportation **officers** and other enforcement personnel to review applications from **illegal aliens** seeking legal status under the new immigration law.

The assignments have caused concern among immigration lawyers, Hispanic groups and religious organizations, which fear that some of the officials, because of their law-enforcement background, will be hostile to **aliens**.

Immigration officials said that the fears were unfounded and that data submitted on applications for legal status would not be used to deport **illegal aliens**. The law requires that such information be kept confidential unless an **alien** has knowingly made false statements in an application.

The Law of the Land

However, the officials acknowledged that the law would require major changes in attitude for many employees of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The success of the law depends on such changes, immigration experts said.

Alfred J. Heitzmann was an immigration investigator for 13 years and a **Border** Patrol agent for 9 years before he retired. He was called back to be deputy chief of the Government office that will review applications from **illegal aliens** in New Orleans.

"It's a 180-degree change," Mr. Heitzmann said. "I spent 22 years of my life apprehending and ejecting **illegal aliens**. Will I have a problem now legalizing them? No. This program is the law of the land, and I am sworn to uphold it."

On May 5 the immigration service will open 107 offices around the country to accept applications from **illegal aliens**. The office for Washington and Virginia is to be headed by Bruce Chadbourne, who was a deportation **officer** until a few months ago.

The manager of the legalization office in Manhattan, Jack Byrnes, was until recently a supervisor of investigations who specialized in detecting immigration fraud.

'Hostile to **Illegal Aliens**'

Edward J. Wildblood, director of legalization for the Eastern region, which covers 13 states, spent 29 years in the immigration service, serving as a **Border** Patrol agent, intelligence **officer**, investigator and associate regional

## Border Officers To Weigh Pleas Of Illegal Aliens

commissioner for enforcement, among other jobs. He said his goal now was "to legalize as many aliens as possible."

Sam Bernsen, an immigration lawyer, said the selection of enforcement personnel to run the legalization program was a mistake.

"These people are likely to be perceived as hostile to illegal aliens," said Mr. Bernsen, who worked at the immigration service for more than 35 years in various jobs, including general counsel. "As a result, aliens will be apprehensive and may be afraid to apply."

Charles C. Foster of Houston, a former president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, said, "A person who has spent his life trying to detect, detain and deport aliens will have mixed feelings about trying to administer the legalization program in a generous fashion, as Congress intended."

Richard E. Norton, Associate Commissioner of the immigration service, said the people running the program "understand that the I.N.S. has different missions and wears different hats." Many have experience serving the public and reviewing aliens' applications for citizenship or other benefits, he said.

### New Law Offers Amnesty

A Federal advisory committee that studied immigration policy said in 1981 that the public service and law-enforcement functions of the I.N.S. should be separated "to the greatest extent possible." But that has not occurred.

The new law prohibits employers from hiring illegal aliens but offers legal status, or amnesty, to illegal aliens who entered the United States before Jan. 1, 1982, and have resided here continuously since then.

The application period lasts to May 4, 1988. The Government expects applications from four million illegal aliens.

Under the program, illegal aliens may become lawful temporary residents of the United States. After 18 months in that status, they may apply for permanent residence. After five years as permanent residents, they may apply for United States citizenship.

In preparing their applications, many illegal aliens will receive help from nonprofit groups like the United States Catholic Conference, the social action arm of the Roman Catholic Church. Gilbert Paul Carrasco, an immigration lawyer at the Catholic Conference, said he had "very serious concern" that immigration officials would "maintain their law-enforcement perspective in the legalization program."

### Problems of Documentation

"This is a benefits program and is supposed to be liberally construed," he said.

The law will require a major psychological change for many aliens, too. After living in the United States for years as "undocumented workers" trying to conceal their illegal status, they must now find documents to prove they have been here "in an unlawful status" since 1982.

Muzaffar A. Chishti, a lawyer with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, said that thousands of illegal aliens would have "severe problems" finding the necessary documents. In the needle trades, he said, many aliens "worked in sweatshops for fly-by-night operators who paid them in cash, so there are no pay stubs, paychecks or other records."

## Classification

---

Language: ENGLISH

## Border Officers To Weigh Pleas Of Illegal Aliens

**Subject:** IMMIGRATION (93%); **ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS** (91%); IMMIGRATION LAW (91%); LAW ENFORCEMENT (90%); CHRISTIANS & CHRISTIANITY (90%); SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE FORCES (90%); DEPORTATION (89%); TERRITORIAL & NATIONAL **BORDERS** (89%); CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS (89%); **BORDER** CONTROL (89%); INVESTIGATIONS (89%); CITIZENSHIP (78%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (78%); LAWYERS (78%); FALSE STATEMENTS (78%); ASSOCIATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS (77%); CORPORATE COUNSEL (73%); HISPANIC AMERICANS (73%); INTELLIGENCE SERVICES (70%); RELIGION (57%)

**Company:** **BORDER** PATROL (US); IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE (US) IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (83%); IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE (US) IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (83%); IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (83%)

**Organization:** IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (83%); IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (83%); **BORDER** PATROL (US); IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE (US) IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (83%); IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE (US) IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (83%); IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (83%)

**Industry:** LAWYERS (78%); CORPORATE COUNSEL (73%)

**Geographic:** NEW ORLEANS, LA, USA (79%); NEW YORK, NY, USA (53%); LOUISIANA, USA (79%); UNITED STATES (92%)