

## **Ruben Navarrette: Both candidates dreadful on immigration issues**

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### **Body**

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Barack Obama and Mitt Romney should stop talking about **immigration**. Even when they're asked about it, as they were during their second debate, they should just smile politely and say: "No comment."

Otherwise, why remind voters that there is so much about this **issue** that the **candidates** don't understand? Not to mention that **both** of them have taken positions or enacted policies that they are having a tough time explaining?

For Romney, it was his shameful posturing in the Republican primary contests when he lurched to the right and not only took a hard line on anything resembling "amnesty" but also denigrated hardworking immigrants as takers who come to America for the freebies.

For Obama, it is his shameful record in office that includes 1.5 million deportations, divided families, thousands of U.S.-born kids of deported parents dumped into foster care, battered wives deported after calling the police, street vendors deported for selling ice cream or tamales without a permit, and expanded Arizona-style cooperation between local police and U.S. **immigration** officials nationwide by way of the Secure Communities program.

To avoid being criticized for all this by Latino supporters, Obama, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and White House official Cecilia Munoz -- the administration's designated Latina apologist -- insist that it is only undesirables who are being deported.

Meanwhile, community activists in Detroit are protesting what they claim is a serious infraction by the local field office of **Immigration** and Customs Enforcement, where agents are accused of staking out an elementary school to detain parents as they pick up their kids.

How low can the administration go?

In trying to navigate the choppy waters of the **immigration issue**, each **candidate** has his coping mechanism.

Obama retreats into a fantasy world of unicorns and cotton candy where **immigration** officials only deport -- as he said during the debate -- "criminals, gangbangers, people who are hurting the community, not after students, not after folks who are here just because they're trying to figure out how to feed their families." Back in the real world, ICE agents have deported, since Obama took office, hundreds of thousands of gardeners, housekeepers, nannies and farm workers who were just "trying to figure out how to feed their families."

Meanwhile, Romney prefers to keep his answers vague, especially when asked what he would do with the estimated 10 million illegal immigrants in the United States.

Team Obama has to feign outrage over Romney's plan to allow illegal immigrants to voluntarily leave the country while ignoring that Obama prefers the more hands-on method. That's where ICE agents will kick down doors, put

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people in shackles, and toss them into a detention facility. According to a PBS documentary that aired last year, "Lost in Detention," many report allegations of being physically and sexually abused.

Team Romney -- in a futile bid to win Latino support -- is trying to criticize Obama for breaking his 2008 campaign promise to pursue comprehensive immigration reform, while ignoring that -- at least until the debate -- the Republican candidate opposed the concept. Now Romney says that he'll "get it done" in his first year.

Really, what's the point of Obama and Romney bickering over immigration to see who is the lesser evil? On this issue, they're both dreadful.

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