

Build wall at border and repeal the tax cut

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Body

New era, new WPA

Illegal immigrants say they come to America to work. Well, let's give them work. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt created the Works Progress Administration during the Depression years of the 1930s, employing millions of the unemployed. It's time for another WPA.

The Panama Canal is too small for our war ships and large container ships to move quickly from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. In threatening times, this becomes even more critical as we now are the world's peacekeepers. Let the Army Corps of Engineers start **building** an American Canal. All immigrants, legal or illegal, could work at minimum wage plus room and board in Army-type Quonset huts. Each of the 48 contiguous states could send National Guard members to guard the construction. After one or two years of work, immigrants could apply for citizenship. Since the project is not essential to complete, it could take years to finish, providing years of work.

This would solve many problems. It would

- Reduce drug-smuggling at **border**;
- Reduce the number of illegal immigrants crowding our schools, hospitals and welfare offices;
- Reduce crowding in prisons;
- Reduce shipping delays from Japan and China to East Coast ports via South America;
- Improve military response times for large naval ships;
- Increase revenue for import shipping companies and cruise ships now using the Panama Canal;
- Provide protection at the **border** from the National Guard and **Border** Patrol;
- Stop terrorists at the **border**.

D.T. O'Brien | St. Louis County

Presidential values

Two recent events perfectly epitomize the values of our president. First, he proposes sending members of the National Guard to defend our southern **border**. Let me translate: He is ordering mainly working-class Americans to leave their work, their families and, many times, their paychecks to guard our **borders** at minimal pay and great sacrifice. In the same week, he signs a bill giving the very wealthiest of Americans a huge **tax cut**.

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In our president's world view, working Americans are ordered to sacrifice, and the very wealthy are rewarded for being wealthy. It probably never crossed our president's mind to do the opposite: Rescind the tax cut to pay working-class Americans a decent salary to guard our borders.

Bernard Feldman | Creve Coeur

Great sucking sound

Employers say they hire illegal immigrants for jobs Americans don't want. Perhaps there is an alternate truth. Employers hire illegal immigrants for jobs they don't want to give to Americans. Why hire people who might demand decent working conditions, a living wage and reasonable benefits? The key to low-cost labor is to hire vulnerable people.

Isn't this the same strategy we see with overseas outsourcing? Employers are hiring people we might well consider "virtual immigrants." Like real immigrants, they are overwhelmingly over-worked, low-paid and vulnerable. They don't dare make demands.

Attributing the policy of hiring immigrants to the new reality of a global economy is nonsense. Rather, it reflects the renewed reality of corporate greed.

The result is predictable and explains the giant sucking sound Ross Perot heard a few years ago. It is not the sound of jobs going to Mexico. It is the sound of wealth consolidating around a few. And it is getting louder.

Tom Knaup | Webster Groves

Ideas for the border

It is nice to know that our president, after nearly six years in office, has found out that there is a problem on our southern border. Our Mexican allies, as our president calls them, have free access to education, health care and the opportunity for jobs, none of which President Vincente Fox's government can supply. And Mr. Fox's government won't supply it because among its greatest assets is the money sent to Mexico from illegal immigrants in America. As a good American, I am going to give my beloved but not-so-bright president ideas on how to stop illegal immigration.

- Take the employers that blatantly hire illegal immigrants and ship them to Mexico.
- Put up a fence and hire more Border Patrol officers instead of giving a \$70 billion dollar tax cut. I will gladly give up my \$20.
- Make the Mexican government pay for the costs of health care, education, incarceration and transportation back to Mexico, all of which the illegal immigrants inflict on the border states.

I hope these ideas help our president come to the realization that middle-class Americans want a secure border. That would help protect us from possible terrorists so the government wouldn't have to do all that wiretapping.

John Hussey | St. Peters

Can't care for all

I didn't realize the extent of our illegal immigration problem until they started protesting. I was amazed to discover that we allow millions of people who are not here legally access to Medicaid, food stamps and housing assistance. This puts a tremendous burden on our government.

We don't financially penalize the companies that hire illegal immigrants as cheap labor. This reduces benefits and wages for Americans. Companies should receive a substantial financial penalty to curtail this practice.

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Normally I am a bleeding-heart, but we can't afford to take care of the whole world. If we continue to offer benefits to illegal immigrants, they will continue to risk life and limb to come to this country. I would, too.

Sharon Stone | St. Peters

Wrong side of **border**

President George W. Bush is approaching the immigration problem at the U.S. **border** with Mexico from the wrong side of the **border**. Mr. Bush should file a U.S. lawsuit in the Mexican courts against Mexico President Vicente Fox for his failure to seal and patrol his northern Mexican **border** so that no Mexicans can leave his country unless they are legal.

The lawsuit also should include sanctions against Mr. Fox for failing to provide jobs for the millions of his Mexican countrymen who resort to dangerous **border** crossings to find work in the United States.

Fences will not stop the illegal immigrants, but 11 million Mexicans employed as **border** guards could do so. Mr. Fox seriously should consider giving these jobs to his countrymen rather than posturing about suing the United States for putting U.S. National Guard military personnel for our protection along the U.S. **border**.

Barbara Venker | St. Louis

New dream

If our immigration policy is intended to invite a limited number of new Americans to this country, why should it include a guest worker program?

In America, we believe that everyone is created equal and anyone can boot-strap his way up from the bottom to the top. Isn't it un-American to import a low-wage servant class?

If President George W. Bush intends to give a path to citizenship (amnesty) to the 11 million illegal immigrants now in the country, why is he determined to start a guest worker program to bring in even more foreign workers?

Would the president and our "representatives" in Washington put all Americans in competition with an unlimited number of low-wage, imported guest workers? Is this the new, corporatized American dream?

Nick Ivanovich | Fenton

Complex? Insulting.

The likes of President George W. Bush and U.S. Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass., insist that it must be all or nothing when it comes to an immigration bill. Everything from secured **borders** to parameters for citizenship to amnesty must be covered in one piece of legislation. The president will sign nothing less.

The legislation provides for as many as 200 million new immigrants, nearly doubling our population, and supplementing our **Border** Patrol with 6,000 National Guardsmen, who will engage illegal immigrants in no way and under no circumstances. Meanwhile, we will recruit and train 6,000 **Border** Patrol personnel.

You might as well have the existing **Border** Patrol recruit the next 6,000 illegal immigrants who cross the **border**. It would be to our advantage to have these positions filled with people who speak fluent Spanish.

Don't let the politicians insult you by saying the issues are too complex to grasp. "Protect our **borders** first" should be the war cry.

Tom Strecker | Barnhart

Notes

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Graphic

GRAPHIC

GRAPHIC / ILLUSTRATION - (1 editorial cartoon by Scott Stantis: National Guard U.S. **border** patrol)

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