

Skin color deeply influences immigration debate

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Body

The Common Ground conversations between Cal Thomas and Bob Beckel continue to be one of my favorite USA TODAY features. But Beckel's correct identification of the Arizona immigration debate as having some relationship to "skin color" was quickly dismissed by Thomas. He responds, "I'm just trying to cut through the politically correct nonsense." This was a knee-jerk reply that diminishes Thomas' insights ("Immigration heats up the desert," The Forum, Thursday).

Thomas could add greater credibility to his conservative musings by acknowledging that many of the issues that we continue to deal with today are shaped by our history of less-than-equal justice.

History reminds us that it was necessary to wage protests and enact new legislation in order to make the laws of our nation put in practice the ideals of the Founders. Farm workers, women, blacks and their advocates, could remind Thomas that Beckel's comments were not "politically correct nonsense."

Gilbert H. Caldwell

Asbury Park, N.J.

Work together on fix

The debate on illegal immigration is heating up more and more each day. Whatever your stance is on Arizona's immigration law, illegal immigration is an issue that must be tackled.

Bob Beckel and Cal Thomas have a good suggestion to settle the issue, which is to allow all 11 million illegal immigrants to register with the government and set them on a path to citizenship, though with certain obligations to face first.

It's an idea that makes sense. The illegal immigration issue should be studied by a bipartisan task force and its conclusions should be a starting point for President Obama. Forget political parties and forget your opinion on the Arizona law for now. Let's focus on the big picture together.

Steve J. Wilson

Manchester, Conn.

Ariz. law mirrors others

I owned and operated a small chain of specialty stores in Southern California from 1965 to 2007. In 1986, President Reagan signed a bill that made it mandatory for employers to verify a person's citizenship. We checked each and every person's citizenship, regardless of the color of his skin. That wasn't racism.

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The **debate** over illegal **immigration** has gotten out of control. Most people do not realize that Arizona's law mirrors current federal laws.

Bob Bergstrom

Calabasas, Calif.

Graphic

PHOTO, B/W, Nick Oza, The Arizona Republic

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