

OTHER OPINION: College the latest perk for illegals

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Body

The illegal immigration time bomb, fostered by a vocal open borders lobby lusting after cheap labor, has exploded. Its repercussions are becoming a tremendous burden.

Adding to the blatant disrespect for our rule of law is the ultimate insult from our "friend" Mexico: Its government distributes millions of "guide books" on how to enter the United States illegally and then enjoy all of our benefits.

They pay little or no taxes, bring in diseases and suck away millions of taxpayer dollars in services ranging from health care to education. A growing number are criminals. And their babies become automatic U.S. citizens.

Now soft-headed liberals want to reward these **illegals** with another **perk** --- **college** education.

Unfortunately the U.S. Supreme Court voted in 1982 that states must provide a free high school education to every child, even those here illegally. Ironically, in that same ruling, the court also said "like all persons who have entered the U.S. unlawfully, these children are subject to deportation." So if the feds don't remove them, the taxpayer is gouged to educate them.

In 1996, Congress made it unlawful for states to grant any post-secondary education benefits, including tuition breaks, to illegal aliens. So any state action allowing this is subject to legal challenge, as in Kansas.

Incredibly, Georgia **college** presidents recently have begun doling out in-state tuition to illegal immigrant applicants --- at the expense of legal applicants facing increased competition for collegiate slots.

As criticism of this unfairness grows, and as tuition rates rise, what is the knee-jerk liberal response? Don't deport them, charge out-of-state tuition.

Washington state found granting such **college** breaks for the children of illegal migrant workers basically benefited foreign students with expired visas---an unintended consequence underscoring the opportunity for fraud.

At a time when our nation is conducting a war on terrorism, our universities should assist with homeland security. The Justice Department is trying to get **colleges** to help identify foreign enrollees, especially since there are all too many Muslim "students" from countries on the State Department's terrorist watch list who overstay their visas and melt into society.

OTHER OPINION: College the latest perk for illegals

Yet this isn't happening, which is why Georgia's General Assembly must stipulate that colleges bar illegal immigrants from enrollment.

The United States has the most generous legal immigration policy in the world. There are legal programs where foreign workers register, receive a decent wage and have a criminal background check.

As for those parents illegally here with children in public schools, let those high schoolers who wish to attend an American college be allowed to report back to their country of origin and legally apply for an education visa.

Americans for Immigration Control estimates non-citizens collect nearly \$7 billion a year in benefits. College education is just the latest policy encouraging foreigners to snare one more perk at the expense of our own people.

It's outrageous that these magnets for illegal immigration have been put in place behind closed doors with virtually no public debate. This must stop.

What must start is a sustained campaign to deport illegals and the prosecution and imprisonment of employers who knowingly hire them.

That would be a powerful signal, and would gradually reduce immigration to more manageable numbers.

* Phil Kent of Atlanta is national spokesman for Americans for Immigration Control.

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OTHER OPINION: College the latest perk for illegals

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