

Illegal immigrants pay taxes, benefit Oregon

University Wire

February 27, 2007 Tuesday

Copyright 2007 Oregon Daily Emerald via U-Wire

Section: **EDITORIAL**

Length: 516 words

Byline: Staff **Editorial**, Oregon Daily Emerald; **SOURCE:** U. Oregon

Dateline: EUGENE, Ore.

Body

Out-of-state tuition is three times higher than in-state tuition. For the children of **illegal** immigrants, who have a difficult time receiving in-state tuition, the idea of **paying** out-of-state tuition creates an insurmountable burden to receiving a quality education. For the second time in four years, the Oregon House of Representatives has introduced tuition equity legislation, which would loosen restrictions on in-state tuition benefits for the children of **illegal** immigrants.

The main argument against this legislation is that **illegal** immigrants are not "playing by the rules." The rules -- however our legislators decide to define them -- do not factor into the realities of immigration, **illegal** or otherwise. This is a knee-jerk reaction to a perceived problem -- a political construct borne of populist sentiments and xenophobia. Laws should not act as immovable burdens to individual greatness.

The long-held belief, propagated by the likes of Lou Dobbs and other anti-immigration crusaders, is that **illegal** immigrants are draining federal and state coffers. However, Welfare Reform of 1996 disqualified **illegal** immigrants from receiving benefits like food stamps or welfare benefits. Further, two-thirds of all immigrants **pay** Medicare, Social Security and income **taxes**, according to the Reason Foundation. In fact, **illegal** immigrants are **paying** more into our system and receiving fewer benefits than ever before -- not that the majority of immigrants want benefits. **Illegal** immigrants are upwardly mobile at a level that outpaces native-born Americans. The only services **illegal** immigrants receive is emergency medical care and a K-12 education.

If **illegal** immigrants reside in Oregon, **pay taxes** and send their children to school, then they are de facto citizens. Denying an individual benefits from a system into which he has **paid** is unfair and anti-American.

Denying an individual's ability to seek higher education, if the individual's ability merits it, does not make economic sense. Figures from a National Research Council study show that **illegal** immigrants with a high school education create a lifetime burden of \$31,000, while the average immigrant with a college degree was found to **pay** \$105,000 into the system over his or her lifetime.

Oregon wouldn't be breaking new ground by allowing immigrants to receive in-state tuition. Other states have passed similar legislation, making it easier for immigrants to inculcate themselves into society. The legislation would still attach stipulations to receiving in-state tuition, including living in the state for three years, graduating from an Oregon high school and creating "plans to become a citizen or a legal resident alien."

Oregon's legislature should recognize the benefits that immigrants bring to our state. Providing affordable education to all of those who deserve it should be a prime tenet of our state. **Illegal** immigrants may not be "playing by the rules," but we can always change the rules so they are more equitable and do not service the more reactionary segments of our society.

Illegal immigrants pay taxes, benefit Oregon

(C) 2007 Oregon Daily Emerald via U-WIRE

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: TUITION FEES (99%); **ILLEGAL** IMMIGRANTS (93%); IMMIGRATION (91%); IMMIGRATION OF MINORS (90%); WELFARE BENEFITS (90%); LEGISLATION (90%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (90%); HIGH SCHOOLS (89%); CITIZENSHIP (78%); PUBLIC HEALTH & WELFARE LAW (78%); RACISM & XENOPHOBIA (78%); NATURALIZATION (78%); PRIMARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION (77%); CERTIFICATES, DEGREES & DIPLOMAS (77%); INCOME ASSISTANCE (76%); MEDICARE (72%); SECONDARY SCHOOLS (72%); SOCIAL SECURITY (71%); US SOCIAL SECURITY (71%); FOOD STAMPS (71%); COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (61%)

Organization: REASON FOUNDATION (55%)

Industry: HIGH SCHOOLS (89%); PRIMARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION (77%); MEDICARE (72%); SECONDARY SCHOOLS (72%); COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (61%)

Geographic: OREGON, USA (94%); UNITED STATES (92%)

Load-Date: February 27, 2007