

## High Cost of Illegal Immigrants

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### **Body**

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Lawrence E. Harrison's Jan. 12 op-ed column was one of the best presentations I have seen on the problems caused by unchecked immigration. These problems are especially severe in Southern California, where illegal immigration has been a major cause of the current fiscal crisis.

For example, nearly two-thirds of the births in L.A. County-operated hospitals today are to parents who are illegal aliens. Because most of these births are covered by Medicaid, they are costing taxpayers nearly \$ 100 million a year. And because these children are automatically U.S. citizens and eligible for welfare benefits, their illegal parents are collecting nearly \$ 250 million a year in welfare, up from a little more than \$ 100 million in 1989.

Given that the Border Patrol estimates that more than 2 million illegal immigrants entered the United States last year, it is safe to say these costs will continue to climb unless we as a nation, as Mr. Harrison said, redouble our efforts to control illegal immigration. I have introduced a package of bills to do that, by devoting more resources to enforcement and the elimination of document fraud and by stopping the payment of federal welfare and unemployment benefits to illegals.

As the extent of the problem becomes better known outside California, public pressure to take action will intensify. Clearly, Congress has an obligation to address this problem.

ELTON GALLEGLY U.S. Representative (R-Calif.) Washington

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