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Morning News 8/17/09

By Bryan Griffith, August 17, 2009

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1.

Data: Many deported felons just sneak back across border

U.S. pushing prosecution, lengthy prison terms to deter re-entry

By Daniel González

The Arizona Republic (Phoenix), August 17, 2009

The goal of the U.S. government's expanding program to rid the country of foreign-born illegal immigrants who commit violent crimes and deport them so they no longer pose a threat

The government has successfully deported hundreds of thousands of foreign-born criminals significant number have come back again, illegally, to the United States, often to commit new crimes. In a new government data and interviews with law-enforcement authorities, federal prosecutors and lawyers.

There are no broad government statistics on how many deported criminals re-enter the United States. Arrests by Border Patrol agents in the Tucson region alone suggest the number is high. In 2008, 10 percent of the 317,696 immigrants arrested by agents in Tucson, one of nine sectors on the border, were charged with felony counts of re-entering illegally, either because they had prior felony convictions in the U.S. or previously had been formally deported. Crossing the border illegally is typically a major problem for re-entry of people who have been deported, especially those with criminal histories, representing a vexing and persistent problem in the government's stepped-up effort to battle illegal immigration. The government doesn't have the resources to prosecute all of them, and in the past most were simply just deported.

There is no easy answer, especially as authorities struggle with shrinking budgets and increasing numbers of deportees.

But now to deter re-entry, the government is beefing up efforts to prosecute violent criminals who re-enter the country after they've been incarcerated and then deported, sentencing the most dangerous offenders to lengthy prison terms, rather than just automatically sending them back home.

The goal is to prevent deported criminals who re-enter the U.S. from committing more crimes. "We want to prevent re-entering," said Joseph Koehler, an assistant U.S. attorney in Phoenix who prosecutes these cases.

The only way to deter violent criminals who get "formally kicked out of the country" and "make it very clear that there is a sanction for coming into the United States," Koehler said.

But even that is no guarantee that a criminal prosecuted for re-entering the country illegally

then deported again won't sneak back into the country.

"I'd say it happens fairly frequently," Koehler said. "It certainly is not the majority of the people we prosecute, but there are a significant number who do."

Jessica Vaughan, director of policy studies at the Center for Immigration Studies, a think tank in Washington, D.C., that favors less immigration, said prosecuting deported criminals who return to the United States is effective at preserving public safety because it takes criminals off the street.

"These are not just people coming to work as bus boys," she said. "They are coming to return to a life of crime."

But, she said, it is difficult to say whether prosecuting deported criminals actually deters them or others from re-entering illegally.

"The only way to stop that is to have better security at the border," she said.

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<http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/news/articles/2009/08/16/200908...>

2.

Study says guest worker program may help stop illegal immigration

By Kitty Felde

The KPCC News (Pasadena, CA), August 17, 2009

<http://www.scp.org/news/2009/08/17/immigration-study/>

This fall, Congress is expected to tackle comprehensive immigration reform. A Washington think tank says the best way to stop illegal immigration is with a guest worker program. KPCC's Washington Correspondent Kitty Felde reports.

The Cato Institute says tougher border enforcement would reduce the number of illegal immigrants in the U.S. workforce. But the libertarian think tank says it would also increase the value of the illegal immigrant workers that remain.

It's supply-and-demand: fewer unskilled illegal immigrant workers available for some of the grimmest work means their pay goes up. And Cato estimates that as their pay went up, everyone else's income would go down by about half a percent.

But Cato says if the U.S. adopted a guest worker program for low-skilled immigrants, it would hold down their pay and increase everyone else's by more than a percent. The Cato study says a guest worker program that offered temporary green cards to immigrant workers would eliminate smuggler fees and create higher immigrant productivity. The Cato Institute did not examine the economic impact of giving illegal immigrants permanent legal status.

3.

Danbury ICE Talks Lead To Fewer Immigrants

The Associated Press, August 15, 2009

Danbury, CT -- Immigrants are fleeing this western Connecticut city as the economy falters and the police department begins a partnership with federal immigration officials.

The partnership was announced this week by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency this week. It will train Danbury police officers to identify criminals who have broken immigration laws.

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<http://www.courant.com/community/danbury/hc-ap-ct-danbury-immigratiaug15...>

4.

Illegal immigrants burden UMC

Hospital not reimbursed for illegal immigrants' dialysis treatments

By Paul Harasim

The Las Vegas Review Journal, August 16, 2009

Tethered to the dialysis machine behind her reclining chair by two tubes attached to a catheter in her chest, Marta Berrera wearily stares at nothing in particular as blood flows out of, and then back into, her body.

Every four or five days, she shows up at University Medical Center's emergency room, her failing kidneys requiring that her waste be filtered and excess fluid be removed through artificial means.

"I am so thankful to this hospital for doing this for someone who is not a citizen," she said Thursday, an interpreter translating her Spanish as she choked back tears. "Without this help, I would die and my four children would be without a mother."

Wrapped up in Berrera's expression of gratitude is a dilemma that confounds the health care professionals at the only publicly supported hospital in Las Vegas.

"Our people are really torn," said Brian Brannman, UMC's chief operating officer. "We want to take care of people who are ill. We're proud that we can save lives. But our employees are also worried about the survival of UMC. They know that the appetite of taxpayers for helping undocumented immigrants is limited."

Since April, UMC has been spending about \$2 million per month providing emergency dialysis services to 80 illegal immigrants, Brannman said.

He projects that these services at UMC could run more than \$24 million in the current fiscal year.

In each of the five prior years, the hospital provided the same emergency services to half as many illegal immigrants for a little more than \$1 million per month.

Brannman said the hospital receives no reimbursement from federal, state or local sources to provide this life-saving treatment for people who have entered the country illegally.

But under federal law, any patient who shows up at an emergency department requesting an examination or treatment for a medical condition must be given an appropriate medical screening to determine whether there is an emergency. If there is, treatment must be provided.

"When we're projecting a budget deficit of \$70 million for fiscal year 2010, you can see that \$24 million in dialysis treatment that's not reimbursed is an awfully big chunk," Brannman said.

UMC health care professionals say discussion of how to reform the nation's health care system must include how to shore up taxpayer-supported hospitals, strained to the breaking point by following the law to care for those who are breaking it.

Health care costs for illegal immigrants, a hot-button issue in the current debate, vary widely because of the difficulty in obtaining accurate information on illegal immigrants. But all estimates run into the billions of dollars.

UMC staffers contend more efforts also must be made to persuade foreign nationals to head home for care.

And, they say, unless there is meaningful immigration reform, taxpayers can expect to pay more to wait longer for their own emergency services.

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<http://www.lvrj.com/news/53343302.html>

5.

Dallas immigrant leaders call for Mexico to investigate all its consulates in U.S.

By Dianne Solis

The Dallas Morning News, August 17, 2009

Mexican immigrant leaders in Dallas have called for a national investigation of Mexican consulates across the U.S. in the wake of an investigation into alleged financial irregularities at the consulate in Dallas.

The move comes as Mexican officials deepen their investigation into alleged skimming of document fees at the Dallas office. The investigation has triggered the pending departure of Consul General Enrique Hubbard, who took over the Dallas post in June 2006.

Over the weekend, immigrant leaders said the 64-year-old Hubbard had inherited problems at the consulate and was trying to fix them.

"We have had a problem of years and years and years," said Jorge Navarrete, a legal immigrant from the Mexican state of Guanajuato.

Navarrete said Mexican consulates around the U.S. should be investigated for potential scams involving the skimming of fees for documents such as Mexican passports and identification cards.

Alfredo Castañeda, a naturalized U.S. citizen, called for the Mexican government to provide more transparency in its public accounting of funding to all consulates. "Public officials, public accounts," said Castañeda, who is from northern Mexico.

"This investigation shouldn't be just for North Texas, but should be much greater and in all the consulates," he said.

Even before problems surfaced in Dallas, some members of the Texas bar had questioned the manner in which Mexican consulates select or guide Mexican citizens to U.S. attorneys on lucrative personal injury cases. Such judgments can result in million-dollar settlements.

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<http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/world/mexico/stories/DN...>

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