

## **Does President Trump really hate avocados?**

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"The United States could be out of avocados in as little as three weeks" was my favorite recent headlines reacting to the president's threats to shut down the southern border if Mexico does not stop incoming migrant caravans.

Plenty of articles took a more serious approach and discussed the domestic business dollars that could hypothetically be lost if the decision was actually made to completely close all border activity. However, this fear-mongering title made laugh and then sigh a very long sigh.

The U.S. produced somewhere in the neighborhood of 146,000 tons of avocados in 2017, according to Statista. The financial numbers of these American-grown super-snacks add up to approximately \$392 million in sales for farmers. All things considered, though, President Trump was not making a statement about his culinary proclivity to any certain green health food. The president was more precisely referring to the color of green most Americans turn when we think about the cost and time spent dealing with illegal immigration.

The Cato Institute did a study showing that in 2017, illegal immigration could have cost the U.S. as much as \$15.6 billion. Other studies have estimates all over the board because it is insanely hard to come up with a practical number. Most estimates have unambiguous parameters and fail to account for things like economic impact on public schools, financial losses due to accidents/crime, and other things such as Social Security fraud. No matter the factors considered, illegal immigration is a serious issue bearing not just a financial liability, but also a moral implication. People coming to America have a legal obligation to do it in a way that meets the requirements set forth by our governing bodies. Simply walking in or overstaying a legally attained visa is not a legal or accepted way of gaining citizenship.

Countless legal immigrants have gained citizenship and are disenfranchised when faced with others who have disregarded the process. According to the National Council of State Legislatures, around 1.1 million legal immigrants received a status of legal permanent resident in 2017. Quoted in an article by Deroy Murdock of the National Review, Nayla Rush said: "What I can't understand is the arrogance, the defiance of these people. I could comprehend someone wanting a better life, sneaking in, and if caught, feeling apologetic. But these people are marching in front of cameras, in front of the whole world. They demand to be admitted here. Where does this sense of entitlement come from?"

Nayla was born in Lebanon and gained her needed paperwork in just three weeks after making her request at the U.S. embassy in Beirut. Her story is similar to that of many legal immigrants, yet many more don't share the expediency she enjoyed. Challenging factors face all who would try to gain citizenship to our great nation. Anyone who believes otherwise is frankly wrong. In

some cases, there are issues pertaining to a person's eligibility that can cost much more than he or she has available and could take excessive amounts of time to correct.

These facts remain: Trump doesn't want to take your avocados and he doesn't even want to keep legal immigrants from coming to America. He is faced with a daunting task of making the decision to let in thousands of unvetted invaders or go the hard road and get tough on border security. I pray he makes decisions for the good of the American people, even if it means I have to pay more for my avocados.

Justin Kennedy is chair of the Cherokee County Young Republicans.