



Letter To The Editor: Words Matter

Barbara Dresslar

February 1, 2019

To the Editor:

People who choose to use the word “illegal” to describe “undocumented” immigrants foster ignorance about immigration in the U.S. Let’s look at the facts of immigration:

- The Economic Policy Institute reports 9 percent of California’s working population is undocumented. Imagine losing almost 1 in 10 of our workers in jobs no one else wants.
- The USDA says half the labor on farms is undocumented immigrants. Elimination of undocumented immigrant labor would cause 3,500 dairies to close and spike milk prices 90%.
- Stephen Goss, chief actuary of Social Security says undocumented immigrants paid \$13 Billion into Social Security in 2010, which increases yearly. He notes Social Security increasingly relies on those funds as Baby Boomers retire. By law undocumented immigrants never receive those funds.
- The Center for Disease Control and the Census Bureau announced in 2017 that the US birthrate is below replacement rate. We now depend on immigrants for the workforce that will fund taxes for public services.
- A 2018 study in the journal Criminology joins other studies showing states with higher percentage of undocumented immigrants have lower crime rates than states with less undocumented immigrants. A Cato Institute study shows states with increases in undocumented immigrants are associated with ‘significant decreases in the prevalence of violence.’
- FBI data documents from 1993-2016 violent crimes in the US fell 48%.

As to questions why undocumented immigrants don’t make ‘legal’ application to immigrate, presenting themselves at the border stations is legal US policy to apply for immigration. Families are not criminals, and yet they are targeted by separating children from parents. NPR and CNN report 10,000 immigrant children were in US immigration detention in 2018.

Those who spread ignorance against immigrants threaten these necessary and hardworking members of our society, and shame their own immigrant roots.

Barbara Dresslar, Sonora