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The DNC's Standard Illegal Immigration Sophistries

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“Illegal Alien” Is One of Many Correct Legal Terms for “Illegal Immigrant”

--Alex Nowrasteh, Cato Institute, Oct. 14, 2019

Since the Democrat News Media Colluders (or DNC) believe that most illegal immigrants will eventually be made citizens and vote Democrat, they fabricate fallacious arguments in favor of illegal immigration.

One of the most common of these, as Rep. Primila Jayapal (D-WA) put in 2019, is that:

No human being is illegal. I urged my colleagues to stop dehumanizing immigrant communities and instead use the term “undocumented.”

Similarly, The Guardian reports that Hillary Clinton, challenged by an “immigration activist,” admitted that “illegal alien” is a “poor choice of words” and committed to abandon it.

The same article reports that the Associated Press struck the expression from its style guide and that the Los Angeles Times, USA Today, the Huffington Post and ABC soon followed suit.

In 2013 the New York Times public editor Margret Sullivan wrote that since “many people find it offensive to describe a person with an adjective like ‘illegal’ I now favor the use of ‘undocumented’ or ‘unauthorized’” instead. Since the CATO article notes that “most people assume that “illegal alien” is the correct legal term,” Sullivan must mean that many people on the DNC find the term offensive. The same argument has also been adopted by migrant rights organizations and combined with other fallacious arguments to normalize illegal immigration.

We reject the word ‘illegal’ to describe undocumented migrants. ... This word is factually incorrect: an action can be illegal, **not** a person.

This “migrant rights” organization, on this basis, goes on to argue that the use of the word “illegal” to describe illegal aliens is

... dehumanizing, immoral, inaccurate and contributes to the demonization of migrant communities. ... [It] is dehumanising and reductive, an insult to the struggle and arduous experiences migrants may have been through. Even when an action is defined as illegal, legal status is arbitrary and often does not coincide with morality. The word also contributes to increased hostility towards migrant communities and insinuates they are undeserving of rights.

Since these claims are premised on the view that the expressions “illegal alien” or “illegal immigrant” imply that the person themselves is illegal consider that claim first.

When little 11-year-old Johnny decides to take the family car on a 70-mph spin in a 15-mph school zone and is called, by the judge an “illegal driver”, the judge is not saying that little Johnny is an illegal person. He/she is saying only that his action of underage driving without a license is illegal. Using the Latin legal expression “qua,” the judge is not saying little Johnny is illegal qua person but only qua driver.

Since the DNC’s foundational claim is transparently false, all of the sub-arguments that presuppose it are so as well. The claims that the expressions “illegal alien” and “illegal immigrant” are “dehumanizing” or “immoral” are false because the use of that term to describe someone does not address their humanity per se but only their status as an immigration lawbreaker, nothing more. The claim that the use of these expressions contributes to the demonization of migrant communities is clearly false, first because that term is not used to describe migrants per se but only illegal migrants. The use of those expressions is not “reductive,” that is, it does not reduce illegal immigrants to their status as breakers of immigration law any more than the judge’s calling little Johnny an “illegal driver” deprives Johnny of his other rights under the Constitution. The claim that the use of these terms is “an insult of the struggle and arduous experiences” they may have been through is no more compelling than the claim that calling little Johnny an “illegal driver” is an insult to the fact that he bloodied his head when he crashed the car.

The argument that the use of these terms “contributes to increased hostility towards migrant communities and insinuates they are undeserving of rights” are also false for several reasons. First, it makes the DNC’s standard deliberate confusion between illegal migrant communities and legal migrant communities. Second, calling an illegal alien an “illegal alien” no more increases hostility towards them than calling little Johnny an “illegal driver” increases hostility towards him. If there is hostility towards little Johnny it is because he broke the law and exactly the same is true of illegal aliens. Finally, the claim that describing illegal aliens as “illegal aliens” or “illegal immigrants” somehow “insinuates that they are undeserving of rights” is no more accurate than that the fact that the judge calls little Johnny an “illegal driver” somehow “insinuates” that his constitutional rights are suspended.

The DNC needs to learn to make basic distinctions and face the real issues for a change.

These DNC’s arguments also make ample use of the Appeal to Emotion Fallacy that fallaciously appeals to emotion rather than reason to win an argument. In the present case the DNC tries to create the impression of an evil boogey man, a heartless Republican or conservative, who, like racists and slavers, wants to deny certain categories of people their legal and moral rights as human beings.

In fact, the opposite is true. The whole point of calling someone an “illegal alien” is that since they broke the law it is they who are disrespecting both the citizens of the country and the legal immigrants who followed the process and that, therefore, have the right to see their laws respected.

The reason the DNC prefers to use such transparent fallacies is because they do not want to face an argument that they know they cannot win on the merits. They do not want to face the fact that illegal aliens broke the law by getting into line ahead of other immigrants that go through the

legal process. They do not want to face the argument that every country has the legal and moral right, even obligation, to defend their own citizens from possible foreign threats. They do not want to face the argument that one party, the Democrats (aligned with weak or corrupt Republicans), are using illegal immigration to increase their own political power, a clear attack on American democracy,

Illegal immigrants aren't allowed to directly vote for the commander-in-chief yet, but in vast numbers they can dramatically alter the Electoral College to favor Democrats for at least a decade because a state's electoral votes are based on the number of people residing within that state, not the number of citizens [in that state].

Despite the DNC's constant refrain that they are defending our democracy, there is nothing more anti-democratic than importing new people into the country because one cannot convince the citizens to support one's absurd policies.

The appropriate way to reclassify illegal aliens is by going through this thing called Congress and change the laws, but the DNC does not want to do that because they know they would fail. The DNC's fallacious arguments attempt to make an end run around U.S. citizens. Since most Americans view a weak border as a major problem for the country, the defenders of weak immigration enforcement in both parties have contempt for American democracy.