

CONCORD MONITOR

Opinion: The National Problems We Should be Focused On (It's Not the Southern Border)

Bob Sanders
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We are sending our national guard to the southern border to help with a “national crisis,” said Governor Chris Sununu in his recent State of the State address.

I didn't know it was our state's responsibility to solve national problems but if it is, governor, I have a few other problems that affect the 603 a heck of a lot more. Let's throw the money we are spending down there, up here.

You want a crisis? Try the shortage of workers. Small businesses are closing around the state because they can't get workers. Contractors can't build housing fast enough because they also lack workers who need the housing to work around here.

The scarcity of labor in health care particularly hurts when it comes to the Granite State because we have the second oldest state in the nation (says the 68-year-old moi).

When I say hurts, I'm being literal. Last month when my son went to the hospital because of kidney stones, in horrendous pain, he spent six hours in the emergency waiting room and another six in a lounge chair out in the hallway because the hospital was so understaffed. The ER looked like Logan Airport on the Sunday after Thanksgiving, but it was just a weeknight.

How about trying to attract workers instead of dragging those dedicated to the National Guard from their workplaces to contribute to the political stuntsmanship in Texas along with 25 other Republican governors?

Governor, you don't have to follow the Republican herd. If you must send our National Guard to the Mexican border try doing something different and innovative, like we always try to do in the 603. Maybe they can set up some tables, and try to recruit workers? While you are at it, can you talk to some of your Republican friends in Congress so they can change the ridiculous law requiring migrants to wait six months before they can work? The quicker they can support themselves, the less they will need local support.

Oh, I can almost hear some readers cry out, that will mean these dark-skinned foreigners will take our jobs! Well, I wish someone would finally take them. People in New Hampshire sure won't. Our unemployment rate is 2.5 percent. Politicians keep shouting “jobs” but employers are advertising for “help,” wanted desperately. They have been frustrated by visa restrictions for years. This isn't exactly a new solution to the country's labor needs.

We put to work the Irish, the Italians, the Jews, and each time the xenophobes warn that true Americans are being displaced. Sadly, many of today's nativists are descendants of those who suffered such scorn and discrimination in the past. And as they get older, they will need these people in the future.

By the way, the border isn't really a national problem. It is an international problem partly caused by our nation. Migrants are fleeing oppressive governments, often supported by the United States, and drug cartel wars armed by gun manufacturers in this country such as Sturm Ruger and Sig Sauer in New Hampshire, and fueled by the demand of drug addicts in the United States.

And that brings us to Fentanyl, because that was the main excuse used to send the Guard to Texas:

“Millions of illegal migrants not just involved with human trafficking and extortion, but with the deadly drug trafficking that is killing NH citizens.”

First of all, almost all illegal drugs are smuggled through legal points of entry by U.S. citizens (that's from the Cato Institute by the way). So perhaps we can use our National Guard at the Manchester Airport and the Portsmouth Harbor. Or if we really need to send them out of state, they could help beef up the TSA at Logan, JFK and Miami.

Secondly, governor, if you are serious about trying to solve the national overdose crisis, dampen the demand! Invest more in drug treatment and mental health here. Granted you are doing a lot, but it is obviously not enough if 400 people in the state die of overdoses each year. As you say, “more needs to be done.” It still takes too long to get treatment, partly because of the shortage of workers!

The governor always likes to talk about creating “opportunities” for the 603. Why don't you start thinking of this “crisis” as an opportunity? Rather than helping Texas try to keep people out, perhaps we should be inviting them in.

As you said governor, “It is a national crisis and NH has the chance to provide specialized support, follow the laws of the land, and keep our citizens safe. Let's do this!”