



The Garden City Telegram

Kris Kobach wants to make political hay by raging about the refugee caravan

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Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach recently stepped away from misleading voters about Medicaid and school spending to write another column for Breitbart, the conservative website.

The topic, to no one's surprise, is immigration. The heart-stopping video of thousands of Central Americans, including women and children, walking north to seek asylum here is simply too much for Kobach to bear.

“Now we have thousands of aliens marching to our southern border,” Kobach writes, “in full daylight with the media in tow, demanding that they be admitted to the United States.”

The issues of refugee resettlement in the United States and the nation's asylum system are extraordinarily important. Americans of good will must continue to examine the right way to respond to legitimate asylum requests, to keep families together and to welcome persecuted persons into our country.

Kobach isn't interested in actually solving the problem, of course. He's interested in using the crisis to further his own media career and enhance his electoral prospects with voters who fear immigrants.

The secretary of state's column for Breitbart is the usual stew of misinformation and misdirection. “The federal and state governments are giving illegal aliens more than \$134 billion in taxpayer-provided benefits per year,” he writes.

The figure comes from the anti-immigrant Federation for American Immigration Reform, or FAIR. It's laughably imprecise: It includes an estimate of spending on U.S.-born children of undocumented immigrants, for example. Those kids are Americans.

The CATO Institute — hardly a liberal organization — was brutal. “FAIR's report reaches (its) conclusion by vastly overstating the costs of illegal immigration, undercounting the tax revenue they generate, inflating the number of illegal immigrants, counting millions of U.S. citizens as illegal immigrants, and by concocting a method of estimating the fiscal costs that is rejected by all economists who work on this subject.”

Naturally, the study is perfect for Kris Kobach.

But the issue of immigration can't be limited to dollars and cents. Most Americans understand our country's role as a refuge for those seeking peace and freedom.

Kobach does not. "This notion that we have a moral obligation to bring in refugees, many of whom will become terrorists ... it's ludicrous," he has said. Kansans, and all Americans, should reject this view.

Supporting the right to seek asylum doesn't mean support for open borders. It means the United States has a moral responsibility to find ways to live up to its own history as a nation of immigrants and as a beacon of freedom to victims of persecution everywhere.

Republicans — Ronald Reagan comes to mind — used to understand this and embrace it. Sadly, many in his party have forgotten it.

There are many reasons to be worried about Kris Kobach as Kansas governor. His amorality and unchecked demagoguery are at the top of the list.