



After Mollie Tibbetts tragic death – we owe it to her to fix our broken immigration system

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The tragic killing of 20-year-old University of Iowa student Mollie Tibbetts – allegedly by an illegal immigrant from Mexico – appears to be yet another example of America’s dangerous and failed immigration policy.

Authorities in Iowa charged a man identified as Cristhian Rivera with first-degree murder Tuesday in Tibbetts’ death. He is being held in jail on a \$5 million cash-only bond.

According to authorities, Rivera – if that is really his name – is a 24-year old illegal immigrant from Mexico, whose movements driving a black SUV in the area of Tibbetts’ disappearance were caught on security cameras. Tibbetts disappeared July 18 while she was running in the rural central Iowa town of Brooklyn.

How many more needless deaths will it take for our immigration policies to change?

Apologists for illegal immigration are already trying to deflect public attention from this horrific case.

When asked about Tibbetts’ killing on CNN, Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass. – beloved by far-left Democrats and a possible presidential contender in 2020 – said that she knows this is hard for the Tibbetts family. However, she said that our focus should be “on where the *real* problems are,” which she said is the separation of “mamas and babies” who entered the U.S. illegally at the border.

Fordham University Professor Christina Greer lamented on MSNBC that “Fox News is talking about a girl in Iowa” instead of devoting more air time to court proceedings Tuesday resulting in felony convictions for former Trump presidential campaign chairman Paul Manafort and a guilty plea to other crimes by President Trump’s former attorney, Michael Cohen. Greer later backtracked for what she called her “flippant” remark about Tibbetts.

Americans should not be distracted by the chirping of these and other advocates of open borders, including the Cato Institute, which claims misleadingly that illegal immigrants commit fewer crimes than Americans. Even if that statement was factual (it isn’t), it is completely irrelevant to this case, and no comfort to the victims.

The reality is that while most illegal immigrants are not violent, many do commit crimes, sometimes horrific ones, just like Americans do.

The nonpartisan Government Accountability Office estimates in a new report that since 1974 there have been more than 32,000 immigrants incarcerated for homicide in federal and state prisons. Other government reports show that most of these criminal immigrants are in the country illegally. They are not usually legal immigrants, who are vetted for criminal records.

It sounds obvious, but nowadays it is necessary to remind lawmakers that these homicides and many other crimes could have been prevented with better border security to block illegal entry into the U.S.

The fact that illegal immigration exacerbates crime is not lost on America's local law enforcement agencies. Sheriffs and police leaders have become more and more outspoken in recent years urging the federal government – and especially Congress – to shore up our immigration enforcement.

Hundreds of sheriffs signed a letter to Congress in the spring, asking for the passage of a House bill to improve enforcement. The letter states: “Year after year, we have been warning the Federal government about detrimental increases in transnational drug trafficking, gang violence, sex trafficking, murder, and other escalating incidents of crime by illegal aliens entering our country.”

Not only are criminal immigrants a threat to the community, they are a strain on taxpayers. The same GAO report found that federal and state governments spent about \$2.5 billion on incarcerating foreign criminals in 2015 – not including the additional cost of arrest, prosecution, deportation, and of course, the cost to the victims. Now we see how high the cost can be to Iowans for some of the low-wage workers demanded by local farmers.

The killing of Mollie Tibbetts also highlights the role of identity fraud in facilitating the illegal employment that draws most illegal immigrants to this country.

Rivera reportedly used a false identity to secure an Iowa photo ID card and may have used these documents to secure employment at a farm, where he apparently worked for four years. It has not been revealed if he used these same documents to get a driver's license.

Authorities said the Chevy Malibu that Rivera used to stalk Tibbetts and then transport her body to the corn field where she was later found was not registered in his name. That's a common practice for unlicensed drivers, and another in the list of crimes of “otherwise law-abiding” illegal immigrants.

An estimated 75 percent of illegal immigrants obtain false documents. Counterfeit green cards are not difficult to detect, but incidents of total identity theft – in which the illegal immigrant uses the name, date of birth, and Social Security number of a real person – have become more common.

The Trump administration is cracking down on this practice. Last month, Attorney General Jeff Sessions traveled to Boston to announce the results of Operation Double Trouble. Under the enforcement operation, dozens of illegal immigrants were charged with identity theft-related crimes, including fraudulently obtaining Medicaid and other welfare benefits, and registering to vote.

Some of those charged are heroin traffickers, who have obtained U.S. passports to facilitate their deadly illicit commerce.

More can be done, even without passing new laws.

The Social Security Administration, the Internal Revenue Service, and immigration agencies must be empowered to work together to act on instances of the multiple use of Social Security numbers that are easily detectable within government tax and crime databases.

Citizens should be notified when their Social Security numbers have been compromised. Employers should have to terminate illegal workers when detected. Agencies should use facial recognition technology more frequently to detect imposters.

As long as prospective illegal immigrants believe that after making it past border and visa controls they will be able to get a job, a driver's license, and live as if they were in the U.S. legally, they will continue to come.

Like the smuggling rings, the identity document industry is part of the infrastructure of illegal immigration. And like the smugglers, the document vendors do not care whether their clients are harmless workers, drug traffickers, terrorists or criminals.

When authorities allow such illicit enterprises to flourish, they are inviting more illegal immigration, and setting the stage for more atrocities committed by people who should not have found it so easy to get here and stay here illegally.