



Immigration deal a bandage on a chest wound

By: Thomas Lucente - February 3, 2013

Here we go again. Another immigration plan that will go nowhere.

A bipartisan group of senators has fashioned a framework of new immigration legislation to deal with our supposed immigration problem.

And, as usual, it fails to address the core issues and is just another bandage on a sucking chest wound.

The fact is that unions are the true barrier to a common sense immigration policy. Union leaders have always feared immigration.

From the very beginning of unionization in this country, union officials have lobbied hard against immigration, both the legal and illegal type. That led to things such as the Chinese Exclusion Act and the near-race-based quota acts of the 1920s that drastically curtailed immigration from anywhere except Northern and Western Europe.

Today, they continue to fight any attempt to create a comprehensive guest worker visa program, something that has worked in the past.

There is one hard fact of life that Republicans and Democrats seem to ignore with regularity. That is, people will always do what is in their perceived best interests. Government attempts to halt such normal and logical behavior only leads to the growth of a black market.

The United States is an attractive place to live. Immigrants from Mexico, Central America and Asia come here because of the promise of salaries anywhere from two to six times what they can earn at home.

Who can blame them?

They will continue to come here regardless of whether we want them to. And we should want them to. Immigration is great for America.

Despite claims to the contrary, most illegal immigrants are not criminals, excluding the act of entering the United States illegally, which is hardly a real crime. As I have mentioned before, I

bet every person reading this column breaks laws at least weekly, if not daily. That is life in our overly regulated society.

For the last century, immigration opponents have tried to tie crime to immigration but have failed to produce any credible evidence that higher levels of immigration, legal or otherwise, leads to higher rates of crime.

The fact of the matter is that if we are truly to be a beacon of hope for the world's oppressed, we can't seal our borders to outsiders. Anyone who believes that higher fences and more armed border agents will solve the problem simply does not understand that human drive to seek a better life.

In a free society, a peaceable person should have the liberty to cross international borders unmolested by government.

If we want an immigration policy that works, we need a comprehensive guest worker visa program and more. We need a simple path for the illegal immigrants who are here, those who have not committed any crimes beyond coming here, to obtain proper documentation and citizenship.

In other words, we need another Ronald Reagan style amnesty program. But that needs to be coupled with a massive reduction in the cost and time it takes to enter the United States. One should only have to show up at the border, fill out a simple form for a criminal background check, and perhaps pay the small fee to cover the cost of that check.

There needs to be a way for low-income foreign workers to be able to afford to come to the United States without having to wait years and pay thousands of dollars in fees.

If they have no serious criminal record in their home country, they should be permitted to enter our country relatively easily.

The amount of money, time and resources we waste on the border to keep people out is an unnecessary drain on our economy. And with the government spending more than a trillion dollars a year than it has in revenue, we simply can no longer afford such a drain.

Besides, these immigrants are good for America, both the skilled and unskilled workers. A 2009 study by the Cato Institute estimated that a 29 percent increase in low-skilled immigration would boost the total income of U.S. households by as much as \$180 billion a year.

It is time for America, a land of immigrants, to end its xenophobic attitude and lower our borders, at least a little