



# THE DAILY TOREADOR

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## Society must be informed on immigration reform

By Jarrod Miller

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When I played in my high school marching band, our games frequently took us to the sprawling border town of El Paso, Texas. From the top of the football stadium seats, we would usually look over the edges, passing the time by talking smack and spitting sunflower seeds at innocent passers-by below. In El Paso, however, we Lubbock students were continuously in awe about how we could see Mexico from the stadium. “Holy crap, it is right there,” we shouted. “We could be in Juárez in minutes!”

While I had always heard of the debates and stories about U.S. - Mexico relations, the issues had always seemed so far away. However, as I looked out on the quiet Mexico border from El Paso, I realized the Mexico issue was not only closer than I thought — it was right under my nose.

Of course, since my U.S. - Mexico enlightenment in high school, the issue has become incredibly controversial. The number of illegal immigrants has risen from five to 12 million in just the past 10 years, according to a report on the Council on Foreign Relations website.

This population increase has skyrocketed the topic of immigration reform right to the very heart of American debate, and has remained one of the most controversial topics in U.S. politics today.

Despite the close proximity and increasing controversy of the issue of illegal immigration, most Americans have little knowledge of its possible economic impact.

For example, as Senator Ted Cruz announced his presidential bid Sunday night, his proposed intentions of increasing border security were met with roaring applause. To those who are familiar with the economic gravity of the situation, this proposal may be baffling — even right-wing ex-governor Rick Perry knows the economic inefficiency of implementing additional border security.

According to an article in The New York Times, “Mr. Perry said that building a border-length fence would take ‘10 to 15 years and \$30 billion’ and would not be cost-effective.”

Keep in mind, as illegal immigration is such a popular topic, there have been plenty of economic studies conducted on the matter. Perry's findings have been backed by numerous economic reports, such as a report by famed University of California, San Diego economics professor Gordon H. Hanson. While this report speculates that the increased border security has helped lower the amount of illegal immigrants entering the country, he ultimately concludes it is also inflicting economic self-harm by large expenditures. This information is free to the public, yet the applause from Cruz's crowd indicates either they are unaware of the economic data, or they just don't care.

While Cruz may be running under the Republican ticket, the issue of shady economics is a bipartisan issue. As Obama pushes a new program to potentially protect illegal immigrants from being deported, his administration has acted vague about its impact on Social Security costs.

While Obama skips over these costs in his public address, GOP candidates feel the new order will, "impose a serious financial burden on federal, state and local governments," according to an article in USA Today.

As the 2016 presidential election draws near, some of the most heated debates will center on Obama's attempt to temporarily protect illegal immigrants from deportation. As Obama pushes to grant temporary amnesty to illegal workers meeting certain requirements, politicians across the nation have riled up in revolt.

According to the BBC website, there are two main factors on how amnesty would affect illegal workers — the raised wages of low-paying jobs as well as a productivity boost due to high-skilled workers entering into the U.S. workforce. This boost, according to research done on Ronald Reagan's amnesty program of 1986, is explained by the newly acquired ability of immigrants to search for better jobs without fear of deportation.

In addition to the benefits for illegal workers, studies have shown that amnesty would likely benefit the U.S. economy. For example, a study by UCLA shows the proposal could generate, "\$6.8 billion in labor income, create around 160,000 jobs and create \$2.5 billion in tax revenue." Alex Nowrasteh, an immigration policy analyst with the right-leaning Cato Institute, says, "What seems to be the case is that everyone agrees that the economic benefits will be positive from legalization," according to a BBC article.

As the 2016 election process begins to crank up again, national attention will soon refocus on illegal immigration. I can already hear the potential candidates preaching, each promising the perfect solution to illegal immigration. "We should raise borders to the sky," some may say. "How can we stop illegals from stealing American jobs?" others will ask.

However, before we begin to dive into the murky depths of these questions, we should ask the most important question of all — What does the data say?