



Blogs

LP Monday Message: Don't Blame Immigrants

posted by [Staff \(/blogs/staff\)](#) on Apr 26, 2010

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Dear Friend of Liberty,

The recent legislation in Arizona has put immigration back in the news.

The Libertarian Party has a long history of defending immigration. [Our website has an article discussing immigration. \(http://www.lp.org/issues/immigration\)](#) I think that if there's a problem with massive illegal immigration, then one of the best solutions is to make legal immigration easier.

From an economic point of view, immigrants are an asset, not a liability. Business owners usually understand that, but politicians often either don't understand or don't care. In an environment of fear, which is where many politicians seem to want to keep us, they use immigrants (both legal and illegal) as scapegoats so they can duck blame for problems caused by too much government. Republican George W. Bush gave us the enormously expensive Medicare prescription entitlement. Republican Senator John McCain famously put his 2008 presidential campaign on hold to rush back to Washington to bail out failed banks and businesses. When times are tough, focusing on immigrants helps distract from these homegrown threats to our economy.

Perhaps I have a soft spot in my heart for immigrants and foreigners. I've traveled extensively and lived overseas. I worked for six months in South Africa and was welcomed by blacks and whites into their communities. I've spent over six months of my life traveling throughout Mexico. Recently having lived in Texas, I've met and worked with a lot of Mexican nationals who were in Texas working hard in the construction industry. I can imagine that if I'd been born in Mexico or Central America, and the American immigration laws were so convoluted, I'd have found my way around them one way or another.

I realize immigration, legal and illegal, is a controversial issue both for Americans in general and for Libertarians. Obviously, some immigrants take advantage of our welfare system. (That's one more reason to get rid of government welfare.) And some immigrants commit violent crimes. (That's one more reason to get rid of victimless crime laws that waste police effort and fill up our prisons with people who haven't hurt anyone.) However, those aren't good reasons to stop people from coming to America. America was founded by immigrants, many of whom were escaping economic and religious oppression. I think support for immigrants, many of whom are poor and honest, shows our humanitarian side to those who want to characterize Libertarians as uncaring individualists.

I'm also very concerned that the immigration debate will be used as [an excuse to impose a National ID card \(http://www.aclu.org/immigrants-rights-technology-and-liberty/broad-coalition-urges-president-obama-and-congress-oppose-b\)](#). (Let me see your papers!)

Now is the time to stand up for liberty. We must not let the federal government use immigration restrictions as a sneaky way to crack down on all Americans and take away our freedoms.

[See this Cato study on the economic effects of immigration reform. \(http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=10438\)](#)

Sincerely,

Wes Benedict
Executive Director
Libertarian National Committee

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