

*1. In recent years there has been a surge of illegal immigrants coming to the United States. It is presently estimated that there are at least 10 million illegal immigrants residing in the U.S., and immigration has become one of the prominent issues of the 2008 presidential campaign. Indeed, the Department of Homeland Security has committed to building a 370-mile long barrier between Brownsville, Texas and California by the end of this year, with the objective of stemming the flow of illegal immigrants to the U.S.*

*Assume that construction of the barrier would successfully and substantially reduce the number of illegal immigrants entering the U.S. each year. Who would gain and who would lose as a consequence of construction of the barrier? Explain your response*

Assuming that the construction of the barrier would successfully reduce the number of illegal immigrants entering the U.S. each year, the parties that would gain would be the American taxpayers, and the American people. The parties that would lose as a consequence of construction of the barrier would be the image of America, the consumers and also the American people.

There are an estimated 12 million illegal aliens currently residing within the borders of the United States of America. Many critics believe a more accurate estimate is closer to 20 million.<sup>[1]</sup> No matter what the statistics say, there are serious implications these undocumented illegal aliens bring to the United States. There is an enormous financial burden placed upon American taxpayers to cover the cost of housing illegal aliens. According to the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), "The annual net cost of illegal immigrants (after subtracting their tax payments) to the American taxpayer is likely to be more than \$45 billion."<sup>[2]</sup> The largest costs are education of their children, emergency medical care, the cost of the immigration system itself and incarceration for those arrested for crimes. Despite being ineligible, some illegal aliens also get welfare the same way they get jobs: with identity documents falsely identifying them as U.S. citizens. In addition, if they have U.S.-born children, they may collect welfare assistance in the name of those children. In the recent study done by FAIR, it is estimated that the costs in California are \$10.5 billion<sup>[2]</sup>. This money to house illegal aliens is coming from the American people, adding to the already narrow squeeze in the American middle-class. The government has tried to subsidize this by enforcing programs such as amnesty and almost tripled deportation by Homeland Security.<sup>[1]</sup> All this money for deporting already illegal aliens is coming from the American people as well. The fact of the matter is, even if we did close the gate in Mexico, America still has an immigration problem. By implementing this system, not only will Americans see taxes being spent for better sources, but also see taxpayer money affecting them rather than illegal aliens.

Also, with illegal immigration come criminals. There are 12 million people living in this county unaccounted for, some of those people are flat out criminals. Those who would immigrate to America are those in need for a better life looking for a solution to their low class life back in their motherland country. In fact The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), in a 04/07/05 report to Congress entitled "Information on Criminal Aliens Incarcerated in Federal and State Prisons and Local Jails," states that at the end of 2004 there were approximately 49,000 illegal aliens incarcerated out of a total of 179,000 inmates (a 27% rate of illegal inmates) at an estimated cost of 1.2 billion dollars to house them.<sup>[4]</sup> Some of the most ruthless criminals, in fact, are illegal aliens. Members of the MS-13 gang, Latin Kings, and Cyncos gang, are those who

harbor illegal aliens in their gangs. Needless to say, they are not played a positive role in American society. The fact is that if some of these illegal aliens are not caught by the law, they are not got at all period. They will continue to roam the U.S. making money illegally, and going about without consequences. Americans in general deserve the right to be safe and have their children go outside without having safety questioned. One criminal on the streets is one too many. With the current system applied, the criminal rate would eventually reduce over time.

In a country that is built upon education, American has been in terrible situations as of late. With many of those arguing that America has “dumbed down” at the same time having colleges having to reject more qualified students than ever before, the question is where the immigration debate falls into education. According to Pew Hispanic Center, 3.1 million citizen children are born to an unauthorized parent, and 1.6 million children are unauthorized themselves for a total of 4.7 million children under the age of 18 that need to be educated.<sup>[5]</sup> In the microenvironment, highly underpaid teachers are being underpaid to teach illegal aliens in a language that they are not convenient with, to those who did not pay for their education. In a macro sense, those who are in those schools are not getting their fullest education. Having being in an environment where a teacher needs to constantly repeat lectures due to language barriers and having schools meet the state requirements by giving lower standards, the students who are native speakers and willing to work hard do not get any further in society.

The increase of illegal aliens over time has also caused a wide spread of disease in the American community. These diseases will continue to grow if a stop is not put onto this. According to a study done by the Center for Disease Control, TB was tied to immigration, with 53 percent of the new cases in the U.S. centered in four states that are magnets for immigrants, California, New, York, Texas and Florida. In the Texas-Mexico border, amount the 17,651 illegal aliens in the area, 49% tested positive to the TB bacteria.<sup>[7]</sup> In 2002, Dr. George Lemp, director of the AIDS Research program in the University of California said that a study of men aged 18-29 years old indicated that Hispanic men along the border line of California-Mexico have HIV rates 4 times higher than any other California city.<sup>[7]</sup> And with illegal aliens not being tested, these diseases are bound to go up and hit Americans by surprise and hurt us. With no more illegal immigrants entering the country there will be less disease dangers that we cannot account for, keeping legal Americans safe from invisible diseases such as TB.

Despite all the arguments dealing with why the border control would be a positive aspect to the U.S. there would also follow negative aspects. For those who say we do not need or want illegal immigrants in this country because it is bad for our country for them to be here they need to realize that based on statistics, more than 60% of the agriculture industry is run by illegal Americans and around 20% of illegal Americans represent the landscaping, meatpacking, construction, and food service industry.<sup>[6]</sup> What you automatically think is that these people are taking away from the American people. In capitalist thinking, which America was built upon, if we did not need these immigrants, there would not be millions of them occupying our jobs. Those industries which rely on cheap labor from these immigrants will suffer costs that would trickle down onto the American people. Paying extra for that piece of meat, or fruit, you would not think those costs mean much but for those Americans who are already living in harsh situation these costs could be having dinner that day or driving their car to work. The fact that there are an estimated 12 million illegal immigrants in this country suggests that there is a need for additional workers in the economy. This is shown by the fact that we have 12 million illegal

immigrants but the unemployment rate has not dropped significantly at all over the past years even when immigration had not been on a sharp rise. According to a February 2007 study by New York's Center for an Urban Future, immigrants are more likely to be self-employed than non-immigrants, spurring growth in new businesses from food manufacturing to health care. "Immigrant entrepreneurs are now the entrepreneurial sparkplugs of cities," according to Jonathan Bowles, the Center's director. "While immigrants have a long history of starting businesses in the U.S., their contributions have grown in recent years thanks to an explosion of immigration and their high rates of business formation. They are an incredible asset for cities that has only begun to be tapped for economic development," Bowles said.<sup>[3]</sup> So losing immigrants would have a bigger affect on Americans than you think. It would cause a sharp rise in prices and naturally have more legal Americans accept that the must work in low class jobs.

Also, the image of America would also be ruined if we close our borders. The times have definitely changed but this country was built upon immigration. What if Christopher Columbus or Ponce De Leon hadn't decided to flee the country to find new land, America would not exist. By doing this, we would lose our image as the "land of opportunity." In truth "immigration" in a sense works both ways. American industries go overseas to China or Mexico and "improve" the quality of life there by providing harshly underpaid jobs, and immigrants come to American to improve our quality of life by providing labor that is cheap. One could make the argument that greedy American employers need American more because legal Americans with green cards would refuse to take cheap payment. Under the capitalist perspective, those who can provide the most competitive costs will win, and lowering fixed costs such as employment wages is a way for the greedy Americans to make more profits for themselves.

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