

## Re: Continuation of May Day thread

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- *From:* "The Other Kim" <[mjg@xxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:mjg@xxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Wed, 3 May 2006 11:26:45 -0700
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Strange...when I hit "reply to group" the usual '>' that shows up in front of quoted text didn't show up. I'll just note who said what.

Judity wrote:

Ive respected the opinions of every one here even though, over the years, they often differed from mine. Our government officials, both republican and democrat, are at a loggerhead over the illegal immigrant issue. Therefore, can any of the intelligent people here on SMT come up with possible WORKABLE solutions?

For days, Ive read your sometimes heated rhetoric and either agreed or disagreed, without posting. Now, after starting the original thread, which I thought would generate only a few posts instead of 319 plus Sandis new thread, Im eager to move on and hear how you would fix this very real problem if you had the power to do it.

Kim:

I haven't been able to read the original thread, so I don't know what all has been discussed, but I have some ideas. Deporting everyone here illegally is not feasible, logistically or fiscally. You'd never be able to locate each and every person here illegally, and then it would cost a tremendous amount to round them all up and send them back to their respective 'home countries'; there are quite a few here on expired student and travel visas who didn't come from Mexico or other Central American countries. This is a tangled mess of a problem that has been going on for many, many years. The powers-that-be don't want to fix the problem for good; that would mean they'd actually have to pay fair wages for their gardeners, housekeepers, drivers, nannies, etc. There are some things that could be done to help the problem.

First, the border needs to be made impervious, or as close to it as possible. Right now there are entire stretches where nothing is in the way of people looking to come over here other than the completely inhospitable desert landscape with no water for many miles. Increase the number of agents patrolling the border, making sure that all areas are covered. Anyone found within, say, 5 miles of the border gets sent back.

## Re: Continuation of May Day thread

Building a wall won't keep people out. People who want to leave someplace will find a way. A wall has to have ends, so they'll just go around it; if this means a swim in the Pacific or the Gulf, they'll do it.

Next, crack down, I mean \*really\* crack down, on employers who hire people here illegally. It's not that difficult to find out whether a SSN is valid, and with this newfangled thing called the "internets" -- one of my favorite Bushisms -- it's pretty easy to cross-reference with DMV records and other places. Heck, if I can find out info on my next-door neighbor, a Wal-Mart should be able to find out the status of potential employees. Any employer who hires people here illegally, knowingly or not, gets slapped with a fine of \$50K for each illegal hire. Enough of those, and even Wal-Mart will take it seriously. On this topic, why are illegals who are day laborers picked up but not the folks who hire them? How about having INS (or whatever it's called now) agents waiting over by Home Depot stores and other places folks gather to get day-labor work, and grab the guys who drive up and hire these folks?

We also need to enforce existing labor laws with regard to working conditions, pay, etc. Bush has said there are jobs that Americans won't do. That's not really true. There are wages and working conditions that Americans can't accept. For example, there's no way I would ever consider picking strawberries for the wages being paid and the conditions given right now; less than minimum wage, no shade, no breaks, no water on demand. Make the pay fair, allow breaks, give water on demand, have shade available, and I'd give the local berry farmer my work if I needed the money. Same with a lot of the other jobs illegals have; housekeeping in hotels, busboys, dishwashers, daycare providers. Of course, folks will complain that by actually following current labor laws it would increase the prices, but I'd insist on seeing the company's actual books before allowing them to increase prices dramatically.

Lastly, and here's the sticking point for a lot of people, there needs to be a fair system of dealing with the people already here illegally. I've already ruled out mass deportation, and let's also rule out internment camps; I've seen some people elsewhere seriously suggest this, and it always frightens me. That leaves finding a way to grant legal status. I'm not talking about fast-tracking them to citizenship. There's got to be some kind of intermediate step in there, to give them a "guest worker" status at first -- I hate that term, but it's the closest I can come to what I'm looking for -- to allow them to reside and work here yet be able to travel back to their families in their home countries. There would have to be a separate process for this first step, then after fulfilling certain requirements like verifying employment and paying filing fees and whatever the applicant would be placed in the line for PR status. Not at the front of the line, but in the line, just like everyone else. I would give a certain amount of

Re: Continuation of May Day thread

credit for military service, but I wouldn't want to grant automatic citizenship for it; maybe make a fast-track system for military service that would grant PR status once military service was verified.

The real way to solve the problem is for Mexico to get its act together, but it's been messed up far longer than anyone can remember.

Judity:

Id also like your opinion of the ramifications of the May Day boycott. Did it help or hurt the illegal and/or legal immigrants? Will there be a backlash as Ive been hearing on television, or is it just more media hype?

Kim:

I think it will be neutral in how illegal immigrants are looked at, but I think it will open up more serious dialogue about this situation. The marches and demonstrations were peaceful, which helps their cause. I don't know how much of an effect the actual "boycott" had because I didn't need to go anywhere out of my usual routine on Monday, and the only thing I noticed was that traffic was flowing a little better; not much, as this is SoCal, but a little.

I haven't heard anything about any potential backlash. Maybe I'm not watching the right channels 'cause everything I've seen was about how uneventful the marches, rallies, and other demonstrations were.

Now it's back to work for me. I hate to post and run, but there are only so many hours in a day, and I just used up my Usenet allotment for today.

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