

# 1/15/10 Illegal Immigration - A Crime That Pays

Contributed by Spencer Price

When I was a kid I often heard the saying, "Crime doesn't pay." And back then, such was usually the case. Though there were most certainly exceptions, in general, it seemed to me as though most criminals eventually paid for their crimes. And back then, it also seemed to me that most people believed that's the way it should be. Boy, how things have changed.

Nowadays, there appears to be a growing number of people who believe criminals should not have to pay for certain crimes. By justifying these crimes in their own minds, they dismiss the impact the crimes have on society at large and, in time, come to view the crime as no crime at all. The most obvious modern example of such a crime is illegal immigration.

Proponents of illegal immigration justify their position in several ways. First, they suggest that illegal immigration is a "victimless crime" and, therefore, should not be considered a crime at all. However, this assertion is prima facie or, "on its face," false. Some parts of America are actually being ravaged by crimes committed by illegal immigrants — their crimes ranging from simple assaults and batteries to more serious offenses including burglary, armed robbery, drug-trafficking and murder.

Second, supporters of illegal immigration purport that "illegals" support the economy by performing tasks that American citizens simply won't do. This assertion, too, is false to a significant degree. The influx of illegal immigrant labor acts to disrupt the normal economic factors affecting certain labor markets. An abundance of cheap labor artificially deflates wages in certain industries — in particular, agriculture, construction, landscaping, and food service. By utilizing illegal immigrant labor, employers, then, manage to get away with paying a lower wage and, therefore, pocket a higher profit. Absent a supply of cheap labor, these employers would be forced to offer higher wages to attract workers with the result being that a greater percentage of American citizens would find the higher wage levels more attractive and therefore seek such employment. In addition, American workers taking these jobs would pay income taxes unlike their illegal immigrant counterparts. Further, income earned by American workers tends to be spent in America which benefits the economy as a whole. On the other hand, a very large percentage of illegal immigrant income is sent out of the United States which serves to deflate the economy much like air leaking from a tire.

Third, those who support illegal immigration rail that America is a land of unlimited resources and, therefore, shouldn't oppose the influx of millions of illegals. This, too, couldn't be further from the truth. No doubt the United States is a nation blessed with resources and opportunities. However, there are limits. In many parts of America, the demand placed on the infrastructure by a growing population of legal Americans is already exceeding capacity. The addition of millions of illegal immigrants merely exacerbates this problem. Many sectors of the American economy are being crushed by the weigh of excessive demand placed upon them by illegal immigrants — in particular, the healthcare industry. America's emergency rooms are filled with illegal immigrants seeking care for which they are seldom able to pay. The cost of this care, then, is shifted onto the backs of productive Americans who are forced to pay more and more for their healthcare as the unpaid costs are spread across the industry.

Despite all the economic problems attributable to illegal immigration in this country, there is an even more damaging side effect — the total disregard for the law by the illegals. As more and more illegal immigrants ignore the law and as less and less is done about it by the proper authorities, respect for the rule of law become less and less in a general

sense among both illegals and, most ominously, by some Americans themselves. Diminished respect for the law among both criminals and average citizens serves to embolden criminals to engage in further criminal activity, thus diminishing the quality of life for all Americans.

No one I know personally believes legal immigration should be eliminated (though I do believe America's immigration policies should be reviewed and revised with reduced allowances). Real Americans, by nature, are accepting and generous. But illegal immigration is something different. It isn't a benign act by a few downtrodden individuals seeking to better their lot in life. Illegal immigration is a sophisticated social phenomenon engaged in by millions of foreigners who hold American law in complete and utter contempt. Illegal immigration is nothing less than a crime, one that, in America at least, pays very well.