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Idaho Common Sense™



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What to do about illegal aliens?

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The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is challenging a federal government plan to use the Social Security Administration's "no match" rule to crack down on illegal aliens. Currently they send "no match" letters to employers who have more than 10 employees with a mismatch between their name and their social security number. Previously, there were no incentives for employers to respond, allowing them to ignore these letters. The new plan from Homeland Security would give the employer 90 days to resolve the mismatch, fire the employee, or face legal consequences. The chamber is concerned there will be a significant financial impact on industries that employ large numbers of illegal aliens. They also are concerned that requiring industries to comply with the law will create costly paperwork and procedures. But, the Social Security Administration only sends mismatch letters to employers with 10 or more mismatches. Are we to believe employers with large numbers of illegal workers are unaware they are hiring illegal aliens? How much sympathy does a company deserve when knowingly employing illegal aliens?

Also, the chamber claims this plan will result in mass closures of small businesses. But, how can they predict this without knowing that large numbers of small businesses are routinely employing large numbers of illegal aliens? Another chamber concern is that legal workers will be fired if they are unable to resolve an erroneous mismatch or because employers will panic, firing them before they can resolve the mismatch.

Homeland Security Secretary, Michael Chertoff, said, "Employers would rather close their eyes to cheap and profitable labor than obey the laws of our country." Does he have a point? Have we reduced enforcement of our laws and borders to a profit loss

decision? Regardless, do we really have the option to ignore our borders and illegal aliens, as we have done since the Eisenhower administration? Should we only enforce those laws that do not negatively impact our economy, ignoring those that do? Or, should we defend our borders, enforce immigration laws, and spend what is needed to find and deport illegal aliens?

There is data to support one of the chamber's concerns. The Social Security Administration's database of Social Security numbers "churns out hundreds of thousands of erroneous mismatches each year." If this is accurate, should legal workers risk losing their jobs because the Social Security Administration's database is inaccurate?

Regardless of these concerns and difficulties, the only unacceptable option is doing nothing. We must solve the problem we have ignored for 50 years. Is there any data suggesting deporting illegal aliens will be as successful as it was in the Eisenhower administration? Their efforts showed that for every illegal alien deported by the government, another ten self-deported. Will this occur again? Yes. We are already seeing these same results with only talk of putting this regulation into effect. Recently, shelters along the Mexican border started seeing fewer northbound people; instead, filling up with southbound legally deported and self-deported people. Other data from the U.S. Border Patrol showed that 38% fewer illegal aliens were trying to cross the border. This is significant "bang for the buck," increasing numbers of illegal aliens self-deporting with fewer trying to enter our country illegally. Moreover, these numbers will increase once the government implements this regulation.

Recently, one illegal alien complained that Americans are

discriminating, becoming more "hostile" toward immigrants, legal and illegal. She said, "It's just too much of a risk. It's better to be out here (Mexico)." Those Americans, who so vocally advocate not deporting illegal aliens, are creating the very discrimination and racism they claim to oppose. Data suggests that Americans, when they see someone from another country, mainly Mexico, immediately suspect those individuals are here illegally. Moreover, this sentiment is becoming more common. Those trying to shield illegal aliens from deportation are discriminating against those people who have entered this country legally, who are fellow Americans. Why should people who are in our country illegally get protections at the expense of those who are here legally? Is that fair?

What do we do? First, the Social Security Administration needs to clean up its database so we can trust its accuracy. Second, the government needs to work with employers to determine the time needed to resolve the mismatches, reducing the possibility of firing legal workers. Along with this, The Office of Homeland Security needs to offer a safe harbor to companies who are, in good faith, trying to resolve the mismatches. Third, we need the Department of Labor to expand the guest worker program as employer needs arise. Last, we must stop using "economic impact" as an excuse to ignore the law. We can enforce our laws and protect legal immigrants while providing guest worker programs to industries needing those workers. This plan will work.

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