

## **Illegal Immigration; the Problems It Poses**

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Do we really have a problem with illegal immigration in Pennsylvania or the United States? How you answer that question depends upon the information you do or do not have before you. Thus the reason for these hearings and I want to begin by thanking the House Republican Public Policy Committee for hosting the hearings and collecting the data on this critical issue confronting us today.

I learned recently that until 1986, the United States had never forgiven the act of illegal immigration in other than individual cases and had never rewarded large numbers of illegal immigrants with the opportunity for US citizenship. The Immigration and Reform Control Act (IRCA) passed in 1986 was a blanket amnesty for 2.7 million illegal aliens. Congress has passed six additional amnesties for illegal immigrants since 1986 with nine current bills pending in the US House and Senate. In the decade following the passage of IRCA, illegal immigration increased dramatically with the 2000 census indicating that 700,000 to 800,000/yr that now total 8-11 million illegal immigrants currently live in the United States. So much for solving the problem of illegal immigration with IRCA!

You have heard excellent testimony given today and during three previous days of hearings on the cost of illegal immigration for social services, law enforcement, education and medical services and most importantly the cost to our national security which played out most horrifically on September 11, 2001. Today, I would like to offer some information regarding the problem of illegal immigration in several different areas of concern.

First, as the Pennsylvania State Director of Concerned Women for America (CWA), I want to comment on the issue of human trafficking and more specifically sex trafficking. Nationally, CWA has been a leading voice in the campaign to unmask the horrors of this new slavery which preys upon vulnerable women and children. It is one of the most flagrant forms of human rights violations in the world today. It is estimated that internationally, between 800,000 and 900,000

persons are trafficked annually, and approximately 20,000 end up as slaves in the United States.

Trafficking in persons is defined as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud or abuse of power or vulnerability for the purpose of prostitution, forced labor slavery or removal of organs. The US Department of Justice and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children both recognize that pornography is an element that adds to the serious problem of sex trafficking. Women are lured from their poverty-stricken homes most notably from developing countries in Africa, Asia and former Soviet block Eastern Europe with the promise of good jobs, marriage or educational opportunities. They are transported illegally to the United States, distributed throughout the country and forced into slave labor or prostitution.

In a case in Pennsylvania in 2004, a lawyer was charged with imprisoning two Honduran women that he met through magazine ads. He was also accused of abusing the women's children in his home as well as imprisoning other foreign women. His home had bars on the windows and deadbolts on the doors. Central Intelligence Agency reports since 2000 have suggested that Philadelphia is a gateway city on the east coast of the United States identified for victim entry and distribution. This "hidden crime" is not only a human rights, health and security issue in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania but certainly involves illegal immigration.

Secondly, as a physician assistant in family medicine for over 30 years and now traveling to the developing world on medical missions, I would like to comment on the new health risk to Americans that mass illegal immigration is bringing. We are seeing an increase in the occurrence of multi-drug resistant TB in this country. TB normally seen and treated in the U.S. is cured within six months with a four drug regiment at a total cost of approximately \$2000 per patient. With MDR-TB, the time to cure is 24 months requiring the use of many drugs having toxic side effects at a total cost of over \$250,000 per patient. If this disease goes untreated or ineffectively treated (drug non-compliance in patients is common) the latent disease explodes

later. [relate recent experience in Zambia] The CDC reports that 42 percent of new cases of TB are attributed to “foreign born”.

Leprosy was essentially eradicated from the U.S. population; however, in the past three years 7,000 cases have been reported with the need for separate leprosy clinics in New York. Also, polio has reappeared in the U.S. among the illegal immigrant population. In Pittsburgh in 2003, we all remember multiple cases of Hepatitis A from scallions grown in Mexico served in a local restaurant. Two people died and though in this case the disease was carried via produce those same viral strains of Hepatitis A come into the U.S. with regularity in the body of illegal immigrants. Hepatitis B and C caused by viruses that are blood transported carry an extremely high morbidity and mortality and with increased incidence reported outside the health care worker population, government officials have decided that all newborns in this country must receive Hepatitis B vaccine.

Malaria, another disease with high morbidity and mortality especially in young children and the immunosuppressed, has reoccurred in Texas. A mosquito biting a malaria infected body and then biting a second body will transmit the disease. Many strains of malaria are also multi-drug resistant. [experience in Africa]

Chagas is an agonizing and sometimes fatal disease that can cause abnormal enlargement of the esophagus and colon, and congestive heart failure. Known as the “kissing bug” disease because it most often affects the face, Chagas is a tropical infectious disease transmitted by the bite of a blood-sucking insect or through blood transfusion. In Latin America, Chagas infects 18 million people and causes 50,000 deaths annually with no effective cure. In 2001, three people in the U.S. received Chagas infected organ transplants, indicating exposure of the U.S. blood supply to the disease. Two died.

**MOST IMPORTANT FACT TO REMEMBER: Legal immigration requires a medical examination and verification of a body free of infectious disease while illegal immigrants bypass the medical examination!!!**

Finally, speaking as a member of the fifth generation of a family owned business begun by my great grandfather who immigrated to the U.S. through Ellis Island, I would like to say that the employment of illegal immigrants allows some to gain an unlawful competitive edge over those who provide employment to legal immigrants and citizens in this country. In addition the burden for services not provided by those employing illegal immigrants is shouldered by lawful business owners.

Our family business has provided employment for hundreds of families for over 114 years here in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as well as four other states in the country without hiring illegal immigrants. We have purposed to manufacture only in the United States though the costs to produce elsewhere would in many ways cut our costs tremendously. That commitment comes from our strong patriotic pride in this nation and its ability to compete in the global market through ingenious research and development with a work ethic unparalleled in the world. Our family business is certainly not alone in taking this position. A June 2006 National Federation of Independent Business member survey found that 78 percent of small business owners support increasing penalties for employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants. We want to remain in business and compete on a level playing field.

In summary, with all the information we now have the answer to the question “do we have a problem in this state and nation with illegal immigration?” must be a resounding yes. It should be abundantly clear that we must aggressively secure our national borders. Did you know that we currently have 37,000 troops guarding the 151-mile border between North and South Korea, but we have fewer than 12,000 agents to monitor 2,000 miles of the southern border of the U.S. This nation and its 50 states must launch an all out effort to reform immigration policy based on an adherence to the rule of law. These laws must be enforced consistently and uniformly throughout the United States with the borders of the United States physically secured at the earliest possible time. If we do not stop the flow of illegal immigrants flooding this country the horror of human trafficking will continue, the health and wellbeing of the citizens of this country will be in peril and the unlawful competitive advantage gained by hiring illegal immigrants will put lawful businesses out of business.

Thank you for this opportunity to address these concerns to you today.

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