

# Border Alert



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## America's Health Insurance Crisis Linked to Immigration Policies

In the past few years the number of people in the United States without any health insurance has risen dramatically. A recent report from the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) addresses this problem and states that this situation is due in large part to the federal government's immigration policies.

Some of the study's findings are:

- In 1998, 32.4% of people in immigrant households had no health insurance. This is more than twice the 13.9% of people in native households.
- Immigrant families arriving between 1994-1998 make up 59% (2.7 million) of the growth in the size of the uninsured populace since 1993.
- The uninsured population is one-third larger (32.7 million vs. 44.3 million) when the 11.6 million people in immigrant households without insurance are added.

Steven Camarota, of CIS, said that "The debate over the growing number of uninsured in this country has failed to take into account the enormous impact of immigration on the nation's health insurance crisis. . . . We cannot hope to contain health care costs or reduce the number of uninsured in the U.S. without addressing the role of immigration policy."

Recent immigration has increased the number of uninsured children in America by more than 700,000, which offsets most of the gains made under the new State Children's Health Insurance Program, which Congress enacted in 1997 at a cost of \$4 billion per year.

The fact that so few immigrants have health insurance is due primarily to their lower levels of education and, therefore, higher poverty rates than the native population. Many immigrants hold jobs that don't offer health insurance and because they make low incomes it is very hard for them to buy insurance on their own.

### Consequences

Because our immigration policy boosts the size of the uninsured population, it places tremendous strains on the health care providers who currently offer services to the uninsured that are already here. And, as a result, Americans are required to pay higher insurance premiums. All taxpayers are adversely affected, too, because federal, state and local governments have to raise taxes in an effort to keep pace with the increasing numbers of uninsured people.

The study states quite unequivocally that "There can be no doubt that by dramatically increasing the size of the uninsured population, our immigration policy has broad-ranging effects on the

nation's entire health care system."

It is estimated that 11 million new immigrants are likely to settle in the United States within the next 10 years, thereby increasing the number of people in immigrant households without any health insurance to 14 million.

The report concludes that if America is to deal effectively with the health insurance problem it is facing, part of the solution has to include an improved immigration policy that admits far fewer unskilled immigrants. And, the government must also institute a policy that expands access to health insurance to immigrants and their children that are already here. ■

### Florida County Debating How to Pay Health Costs of Illegal Immigrants

Should taxpayers foot the bill for insurance coverage for illegal immigrants?

Palm Beach (FL) County's Health Care District is debating expanding the number of people eligible for its free insurance program to include illegal immigrants. The cost of doing this is estimated at around \$5 million per year.

Opponents of this proposal argue, that ". . . most of the people we are taxing are struggling, too."

Insurance programs such as Medicaid and Healthy Kids don't cover undocumented immigrants. Kevin Gay, director of eligibility for the Health Care District, says that he might be in favor of insuring all immigrant children because they have little control over their circumstances, and society would benefit from their care.

It's a heated debate. Some people

don't want their tax dollars spent on illegal aliens. Others feel that it is "immoral" for the District not to cover undocumented immigrants.

Scott Porter, a board member of the Health Care District, says that expanding hospitalization insurance would help hospitals' bottom line more than it would help undocumented immigrants:

". . . hospitals are required to provide emergency services to anyone who presents themselves. The benefit is going to subsidize hospitals."

Harold Ostrow, another Board member, favors coverage. "They may be illegal residents, but if they work **here**, they pay taxes **here**. And if they pay taxes **here**, they should receive some services **here**."

USBC's Chairman Edward I. Nelson said: "That's just the point—they shouldn't be **here** in the first place."

# Recent Mexican Elections Don't Change Relations with United States

The recent election of Vicente Fox as Mexico's new president is expected to be a boost toward more democracy in that country, but U.S. officials don't expect any major changes in policies between the United States and its southern neighbor.

An official with the State Department said that while the relationship between the two countries has been fairly cold for many years it has been "getting warmer" over the past decade.

According to Peter Hakim, president of Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington, D.C.-based policy group, "Things will pretty much be tomorrow like they were yesterday."

The major issues of conflict between the two countries are trade relations, drug trafficking and illegal Mexican immigration to the United States.

Sidney Weintraub, an economist with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said "On macroeconomic policy and trade and investment . . . I don't think Vicente Fox's policy would be very different from the what the PRI (Mexico's former ruling party) would have pursued."

In an interview with *The Dallas Morning News*, President-elect Fox said that the United States and Mexico "must build a common future based on the creation of jobs, better economic development, better income." Fox is also a strong

supporter of NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Clinton Administration officials say they are pleased by Fox's pledge to confront the Mexican drug traffickers and to fight corruption within his country's police and judiciary. The police and the court system in Mexico are notorious for protecting drug smugglers.

An administration official with the Pentagon, who spoke with the condition of anonymity, said while the U.S. has been generally pleased with outgoing President Zedillo's efforts on the narcotics issue, "Fox's vows to combat narco-traffickers and the corruption they spread are especially welcome.

"The first step is political will," the official said. "This is an opportunity, when you have such a big change, to try to unlink Mexican society from these [drug] organizations."

The official added that, regarding U.S. cooperation in the war on drugs, "We just get a general sense that there's not going to be any major changes."

On the issue of illegal immigration, Mr. Fox said during the campaign that he is in

favor of working toward an open border between Mexico and America. He also called for "an educational revolution" and has set a goal of creating 1.3 million new jobs for young Mexicans.

George W. Bush, Governor of Texas and the GOP's presidential nominee, said that Fox's victory "indicates how far reform has come in Mexico" but added that "Mexico's got to do a better job of arresting folks who break the law, but on political reform they made great progress."

Vice President Al Gore, the Democrat's presidential nominee, said after Fox's election: "I compliment the people of Mexico on an election that was apparently a model election in many ways."

Riordan Roett, director of the Western Hemisphere Program at Johns Hopkins University's School for Advanced International Studies, said that the most dramatic effect of Fox's victory might be to transform Mexican democracy into the real thing.

"It means that we can stop having a double standard in Latin America, where we were persistent in supporting democratic regimes except in Mexico because of Mexico's tremendous importance to us economically and strategically. . . .

"Mexico is well on the way toward becoming an authentic democracy. . . . that is a very positive development in U.S.-Mexico relations, he added. ■

## University Professor Predicts New Nation Made Up of Southwestern & Mexican States

Professor Charles Truxillo of the University of New Mexico, predicts the creation of a sovereign Hispanic nation that will straddle the present border between Mexico and the United States.

Truxillo even has a name ready for this new nation—Republica del Norte, the Republic of the North.

According to Truxillo, the emergence of this country is inevitable. The new nation would consist of the present U.S. states of California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, plus southern Colorado. Stretching from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico, Republica del Norte would also include the northern Mexican states of Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas.

And, are you ready for this? The capital of this new nation would be Los Angeles.

The Professor doesn't think this will happen in the immediate future, but will occur in about 80 years. He also feels that the nation will emerge politically, without any type of "civil war." This will happen because of "electoral pressure" by the future Hispanic majority population throughout the region.

Why does Truxillo believe there should be a new "Hispanic" nation? Hispanics in the American Southwest "have been ruled by three empires: Spain, Mexico and the United States. Under all three systems we have failed to achieve self-determination. Among native-born American Hispanics there is the feeling that we are strangers in our own land. . . . The long history of oppression and subordination has to end. There has to be an alternative."

**Editor's Note:** We welcome the views of our readers on this issue.

## President-Elect Fox Wants to 'Open Border'

Mexico's newly elected President Vicente Fox has said that Mexico should have the same border policy with the United States as Canada.

He added that within 10 years we should have a totally open border and when migration is complete there will be no illegal immigration.

Many of the nine million Mexicans living in the United States do not have residence permits and have entered the country illegally.

Fox said that one of his goals as President is to create more jobs in Mexico in an effort to eliminate the need for Mexicans to move north. "Growing the economy at 7% is a need. If we don't do that, you will keep receiving more and more immigrants."

# What's Up with a government that sides with Mexican Illegals?

*The following are excerpts from a column written by Charley Reese that was published in The Orlando Sentinel.*

It's probably time we realized that whatever self-government we have left in this country is with our local and state governments. The national government seems to have cut us out of the loop. It even shows signs of hostility to us.

Take, for example, the current situation on the Arizona border. Some ranchers there, whose property abuts the border with Mexico, have grown tired of seeing their property used as a dump and highway by illegal Mexican immigrants. They have begun to make citizens' arrests.

... every American has the right to make a citizen's arrest, but the U.S. government is up in arms. About the abuse of the ranchers' property? About the Mexicans violating our laws and our borders?

Oh, no, they are upset with the ranchers. The U.S. attorney there states that he's researching the law to see if there are any charges he can bring against them. Some hot-shot Mexican official has hired an American law firm to sue the ranchers.

It is the ranchers who are being victimized by the illegal immigrants. They are upholding the law, while the U.S. government's entire sympathy seems to be with the Mexican illegals. It shows hostility to the ranchers who are, after all, doing what the U.S. government is supposed to do.

As for the Mexican official and every other Mexican official, they should create a country in which their people can live and earn a decent living instead of being impoverished and exploited by a crooked government and its goons. The gall of Mexican government officials complaining about the treatment of Mexicans in America. They are treated better than in Mexico. That is why—surprise, surprise—they come here.

The true tragedy of Mexico is that the Mexican people love it so, but the country, or at least its government, has never returned their affection. About 20 families own most of the country, and, of course, for the past 50 years it has had pseudo-elections while being governed by one party.

A few months ago, two Mexican army vehicles charged across the U.S. border, knocking down a fence and firing on U.S.

Border Patrol agents who were on horseback. When reinforcements arrived, one of the Mexican army vehicles fled back across the border while the other surrendered.

But guess what the orders were from Washington. Let them go and give them their weapons. It was all a mistake. Some of the rank-and-file Border Patrol officers don't think for one minute it was a mistake. They think that the army vehicles were intent on delivering drugs and the one that fled took the drugs back to Mexico.

The Arizona ranchers have a similar view of the Mexican government, and, in fact, through the years I've talked to agents with the Drug Enforcement Agency and Customs and Border Patrolmen who all agree, despite the Washington chatter to the contrary, that the Mexican government is up to its armpits in the drug trade.

At any rate, Americans ought to get sick and tired of the Mexican government pushing its problems off on us. It is the Mexican government's responsibility to create an economy in which its people can make a decent living and live a decent life. Instead, it exploits the hell out of them and sends them across the border to earn money to send back to their families in Mexico.

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It is not the Mexican people who are at fault here. They suffer from bad government, as indeed do we on the national level. Nor is it the fault of the rank-and-file Border Patrol officers who are not being supported by their own Washington bosses. It is certainly not the ranchers who are at fault. But if you just watch, you can see example after example in which our national government shows a hostile face to American citizens. ■

## More on the Problems with H-1B Visas

Even Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan has announced his approval of plans to increase the quotas on H-1B visas from 115,000 to 200,000 annually. Some of the pending bills have loopholes that exempt H-1Bs working at education or research facilities, or recently having earned an advanced degree in science or math. If these are included the number of H-1Bs rises to nearly 350,000 per year.

Several more bills give an exemption for visa holders already here whose visas have expired and who are waiting to become permanent immigrants. **Nearly half of present illegal immigration is from overstaying a temporary visa.**

James R. Edwards Jr., writing in the *Journal of Commerce*, points out some of the problems with increasing the H-1B visas.

• These workers cannot job hunt. A compliant employee is not in a position to

make waves, either about wages or working conditions.

- Companies are supposed to pay the prevailing wage to H-1Bs. Surveys find wages vary widely.

- Hundreds of thousands of additional foreign temp workers only depress the wages of American computer programmers or push wages below what a qualified American could afford to accept.

- The H-1B program is very vulnerable to fraud and abuse. Officials found a fifth of visa applications in one province of India to be fraudulent.

- Companies don't verify claims of H-1B workers' education and/or skills so there's no guarantee they are getting qualified workers.

- Technology firms insist on Java training **AND** work experience, but many H-1Bs have the training only.

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## LULAC Suggests All Students Take Bilingual Ed

The Texas League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) has recommended that all students have the opportunity to obtain a bilingual elementary and high school education.

LULAC spokesperson Rene Lara said: "Texas children should have the opportunity to learn both English and Spanish in order to fully function in Texas' rapidly growing economy."

Hispanics are the fastest growing student group in Texas, representing 38% of the state's public school population.

The group also said that Hispanic students continue to have difficulty with the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills test, which all students must pass in order to graduate.

Although 80% of Hispanics passed the writing test, LULAC says the scores still are not good enough. (90% of white students and 74 percent of black students passed the test.)

"Our children go into the system with the same expectations and potential for

success as any other child in Texas, but we continue to suffer a higher dropout rate, lower scores . . . and fewer students entering post-secondary education," said Roman Palomares, LULAC's state director. ■

## Assimilation?

"One reason there's not much of a debate about the mass immigration that has swept into the country during the last 30 years is that most of the eggheads who expound on immigration harbor the fond illusion that the immigrants will assimilate— . . . learn the English language, adopt Western and American values. . . . That is pretty much what earlier generations of immigrants did and the result has been satisfactory for everyone.

"But that's not what present-day immigrants are doing. . . . Not only does the United States now sport such quaint Third World customs as child marriage, female genital mutilation and alien religions that are little more than voodoo and black magic, but also we enjoy the rising babble of more than 300 different languages.

"Language is one of the major bonds that holds a nation together . . . . If immigrants don't adopt the language of their new country, it's very likely they haven't assimilated and don't intend to assimilate." ■

—Samuel Francis, Columnist

## BRIEFLY . . .

### Hospitals Pay the Tab for Treating Illegals

Cochise County, Arizona reports that hospitals are losing millions of dollars each year due to treating undocumented immigrants.

Health care executives are asking for federal help to recover some of the losses, and new regulations for the treatment of illegal immigrants.

James Dickson, the chief executive officer at Copper Queen Community Hospital in Bisbee, wrote his Congressman, Jim Kolbe (R-AZ): "If this trend continues, it could jeopardize the financial stability of this hospital." The hospital shows more than \$30,000 in unreimbursed care for 1999.

Sierra Vista Regional Health Center spent nearly \$250,000 last year in caring for illegal immigrants. The Arizona Medical Center in Douglas reported spending \$350,000 annually in direct costs for treating illegals.

Senator Jon Kyl (R-AZ), has proposed legislation that would provide reimbursement for emergency health

care services spent on undocumented immigrants. According to Laurie Fenton, Kyl's chief of staff, the bill (SB 1709), would provide \$1.4 billion over four years to all hospitals along the border. Rep. Kyl says Arizona spends about \$20 million each year to treat the illegal immigrants.

### Screening Visas for Russian Mobsters

The State Department's cops are taking on a big new villain: the Russian mob. An article in *U.S. News and World Report* said that the State Department's Diplomatic Security Service has constructed a huge database of some 20,000 suspicious individuals, businesses and addresses.

Staffers at State usually spend between 30 and 60 seconds checking individual visa applications, so agents are hopeful that the new system will set off some quick alarms. However, finding Russia's more enterprising mobsters won't be easy. "We're not talking about knuckle-dragging thugs," says one agent. "We're talking about Ph.D.'s in physics." ■

## H-1B Visas

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• H-1Bs have become very popular, but permanent employment visas have decreased. Only about half the employment immigration quota has been filled over the past decade. Permanent worker visas require American employers to look for qualified American workers. This is not required under H-1B.

Instead of adding numbers to a system that is in disrepair, Congress should concentrate on reform of the permanent immigration system. Admission should be based on an individual's work skills, education level, literacy and English proficiency, with family members here just one factor considered.

The H-1B visa program serves as a backdoor to employment-based immigration. The permanent immigration system is biased against people with skills and education. Two-thirds of the one million permanent immigrants each year enter the U.S. via the family-based category.

Presently, any increase in the H-1Bs should include tough anti-fraud measures and protections for native-born computer programmers. Importing cheap foreign labor—skilled or not, is not right if by doing so it displaces American workers. ■



### BORDER ALERT

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