

## The illegal immigration industry

We don't often think of immigration as an industry, but that's exactly what it is. If you have any doubt, I invite you to tune in to the Left wing media and their comrades, the immigrant 'assistance' organizations like the army of immigration lawyers, for example. The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) estimates that there are about 15,000 attorneys and law professors who practice and teach immigration law. Let's assume that that is a correct number. We must then add an average of 1.5 paralegals or office workers/staff/interns to that figure. That brings us up to around 37,000 people.

Then there are all the non-profit or special interest organizations that have immigration as their primary mission or part of their mission. One of those is the American Immigration Council (AIC). Its cash on hand in 2019 was a little over \$4 million and its assets amounted to over \$7 million. Its salaries and benefits weighed in at over \$5 million. Its Executive Director was no fan of the Trump Administration. Here is a paragraph from her statement to the AIC's Annual Report... "The government's adoption of a blatantly discriminatory travel ban and a public charge rule are intended to keep people out of our country. The government has already tried to end protections for Dreamers and many with Temporary Protected Status and is actively trying to dismantle the immigration courts. Our country has watched in disbelief as the Trump administration has pursued inhumane detention conditions and family separation, a barrage of mean spirited asylum rules, and policy shifts that have increased uncertainty in how visas will be processed."

This should tell you that there's not much between the lines when it comes to where this Council stands, politically. It's all there in black and white. The Council conducted a rather extensive survey of 'immigrant assistance organizations' in November/December of 2020 and released the results in February. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of the 244 organizations responding (87%) said they would be pleased to accept funding from state or local governments and 74% said they would consider taking federal funds for their programs. If you want to read the survey, log on to: <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/community-support-migrants-navigating-us-immigration-system>.

The kinds of non-profit and some for-profit immigrant help organizations run the gamut from legal assistance, health referrals, family and child advocacy to giving pure advice on how to game the immigration system. Many are focused on the Hispanic or Spanish-speaking immigrants (not surprising when you consider that the vast majority of illegal immigrants or asylum-seekers are coming from either Mexico or Central America). Quite a few of these organizations are associated with, or run by, religious groups.

There are a number of studies being done on the U.S. immigrant population. One of the best is from the Pew Research Institute (<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/13/key-facts-about-the-changing-u-s-unauthorized-immigrant-population/>). Many do not, however, estimate the size and scope of the illegal immigration 'industry' per se. We know what the U.S. government tells us about the cost of protecting our borders, the interdiction of illegal aliens and the price we taxpayers pay to process the ones that are allowed in and not immediately deported. The 'other' costs to states and local communities for temporary housing, healthcare and other subsistence are often buried in the individual governments' budgets.

Proponents of illegal immigration will often say, "Don't forget that undocumented workers pay taxes (payroll taxes and sales tax) just like everyone else!" That ignores the fact that many illegals are working on forged or false Social Security cards, numbers that in many cases are either fictitious or have been stolen from legal citizens. While payroll deductions are taken out of paychecks, many illegals don't file federal tax returns and pay nothing more than those deductions. An even greater number of illegal immigrants live off the tax 'grid' and work off the books, paying no tax at all while sending billions of dollars in remittances back to their relatives in their home countries.

Our government sees nothing of that money. Proponents will also say, "But undocumented workers contribute their cash to our economy for housing, food, clothing, and non-essential goods." True, they do, but these are often not recorded by some businesses, making this revenue part of the subterranean economy, never to be taxed at all.

How, then, do we 'convert' these funds to pay all the bills for the 10-20 million (or more) illegal immigrants in our country? The Biden Administration seems oblivious to the billions of dollars that illegal immigration is costing all of us. In fact, their policies now seem to be encouraging more illegal immigration rather than discouraging it. That begs the question, "Why?" Many critical of the Administration believe that it is done to simply increase the number of Democrat voters when these immigrants are given a 'pathway to citizenship' someday (that they will remember who gave them a free pass to break our immigration laws and reward the Democrat Party with their votes). This may be a cynical belief, but is a very real possibility though no Democrats will own up to it as the main reason for looking the other way and opening our borders.

Many on the Left will decry our immigration laws as being *racist* or *abusive* to the underprivileged 'brown people' who have risked life and limb to come here, often paying human smugglers thousands of dollars to take their journey. They will point to the "American hypocrisy of a White supremacist or White privilege system" as the main reason for our existing immigration laws. It would appear that the Progressives believe that amnesty for law-breaking is justified to redress the inequality of those laws. The Left's collective memory is either painfully short or non-existent. They conveniently forget that the United States allows more legal immigrants (upwards of one million/year) into the country - more than any other nation on the face of the planet - many of whom come from 'non-White dominated' poverty-stricken countries.

Another possible reason why the Left supports illegal immigration could be the result of the massive efforts made during the last decade or so by activist minority groups to instill a heightened sense of national guilt among the population - guilt that absolves us our commitment to the rule of law. This guilt is an offshoot of, or associated with, the mobilization of Black activist groups like Black Lives Matter and others to reinforce the idea that America is a systemically racist country and that we must atone for our racist policies as a nation and that opening the border floodgates is a natural step to assuage that guilt.

Finally, we must address the root cause of much of our current illegal immigration coming across our southern border - the poor economies and lawlessness in Mexico and in the 'Northern Triangle' (the countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras). Some on the Left blame the United States for the systemic and persistent poverty in these countries and point to our past 'meddling' in Central America as the reason they are still suffering economically. And, they maintain, we have a moral duty or obligation to absorb as many of their citizens who can make it to our border even if they are not refugees from political persecution or natural disasters but are simply fleeing rampant crime and poverty. THAT is not consistent with the legal definition of amnesty which many are claiming. Here are the rules for granting amnesty...

"(8 USC 1101: Definitions - Title 8-ALIENS AND NATIONALITY  
CHAPTER 12-IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY  
SUBCHAPTER I-GENERAL PROVISIONS)

*In order for a person to be considered for asylum status, that person must first qualify as a 'refugee.'*

(42) The term "refugee" means (A) any person who is outside any country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is...

*unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, or (B) in such special circumstances as the President after*

*appropriate consultation (as defined in section 1157(e) of this title) may specify, any person who is within the country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, within the country in which such person is habitually residing, and who is persecuted or who has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.*

The term "refugee" does not include any person who ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in the persecution of any person on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. For purposes of determinations under this chapter, a person who has been forced to abort a pregnancy or to undergo involuntary sterilization, or who has been persecuted for failure or refusal to undergo such a procedure or for other resistance to a coercive population control program, shall be deemed to have been persecuted on account of political opinion, and a person who has a well-founded fear that he or she will be forced to undergo such a procedure or subject to persecution for such failure, refusal, or resistance shall be deemed to have a well-founded fear of persecution on account of political opinion."

The conditions under which a person may obtain asylum status (source: U.S. Customs and Immigration Services) are: people seeking protection because they have suffered persecution or fear that they will suffer persecution due to: race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, political opinion.

Each country has a right to defend its own borders and to construct its own immigration policies in line with its own national interests. That is an indisputable fact. Our country is not unique in that respect. The United States' immigration policies have been very generous in the past, but I worry that the current administration may actually be harming our legal immigration system by allowing illegal immigration to take precedence over those millions of foreign-born petitioners who have been waiting patiently for their turn to enter the U.S., legally.

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