

The High Cost of IRCA Amnesty

Price of the 1986 legalization keeps climbing

Report Review by Wayne Lutton

*Measuring the Fallout:
The Cost of IRCA Amnesty after Ten Years*
by David Simcox
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In this study, David Simcox attempts to measure the major dollar costs associated with the amnesty program that was a key provision of the mis-named 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). Thanks to the amnesty program, which came within six votes of being killed in the House of Representatives, more than 2.7 million illegal aliens were permitted to remain in the United States and begin the process toward full citizenship.

Simcox finds that over the past ten years, amnesty has cost U.S. taxpayers \$78.7 billion (substantially higher if measured in 1997 dollars), with costs still accumulating. Direct costs include estimates for 20 federal, state, and local assistance programs used by amnestied aliens, such as Medicaid, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Supplemental Security Income, food stamps, school breakfast and lunch programs, publicly assisted housing, job training, public education, criminal justice costs, and Earned Income Tax Credits, etc. Indirect costs include services for American workers displaced by amnestied aliens as well as education and other services provided to the children of amnestied illegals. According to Simcox, this represents a government subsidy of \$29,148 for each illegal alien

who enrolled in the amnesty program.

This report indicates that IRCA critics' fears were justified. "The amnestied population brought little human capital," Simcox notes. Only 28 percent of the legalized aliens over 24 years of age were high school graduates and 55 percent had never attended high school. By 1992, only 27 percent of the Mexicans amnestied reported being able to speak English well. Amnestied aliens continue to earn wages well below the national average.

The *demographic* "costs" are undoubtedly much higher. More than 85 percent of the 2.7 million legalized were from Latin American countries, with Mexico and Central America accounting for nearly 84 percent of all legalizations. These folks are now inviting their relatives to legally enter the U.S., thus launching the wave of "chain migration" that is transforming parts of the United States. Fifty-three percent of all legalized aliens, with their large and growing families, settled in California.

Simcox points out that women in the now-legalized population had an estimated 1.25 million citizen children through 1996. Public education and three major public assistance programs to citizen children 18 and under amounted to \$36.1 billion in the decade since amnesty.

Since the 1986 IRCA, illegal immigration has continued and, according to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, now exceeds five million. (Other knowledgeable critics place the total much higher.) Border controls remain weak. Few resources are devoted to interior enforcement and employer sanctions. In addition, Attorney General Janet Reno has made it clear the Justice Department has no intention of deporting large numbers of more recently-arrived illegal aliens.

Simply stated, under current immigration policy, if a foreigner can get across the border or enter through an air or sea port, he or she has scored a touchdown and is practically home free. **TSC**

Wayne Lutton, Ph.D., associate editor of THE SOCIAL CONTRACT and co-author, with John Tanton, of The Immigration Invasion, writes frequently on immigration and issues concerning American culture.

Bulletin Board

The INS Fact Book

The Statistics Division of the Immigration and Naturalization Service each year produces a handy pocket-size distillation of facts and figures that is available free for the asking. Contact the Headquarters Office of Public Affairs at (202) 514-2648. An order can be recorded on an answering machine at 1-800-755-0777.

Immigration on the Internet

THE SOCIAL CONTRACT journal and THE SOCIAL CONTRACT PRESS are on the internet. Our address is: www.tscpress.com. Our home page gives our mission statement, information about THE SOCIAL CONTRACT, a list of books for sale, editorials from several immediately previous issues which highlight the contents of each, plus the internet addresses of other groups working on immigration reform, population control and national unity questions.

This home page also hosts the newsletter of the Biocentric Institute edited by William Dickinson.

In addition, here are some other sites that readers may be interested in exploring:

- Philip Martin publishes *Migration News* and can be reached at migration.ucdavis.edu.
- Professor Norman Matloff has many articles and a great deal of data at: heather.cs.ucdavis.edu/pub/Immigration/Index/html.
- Joseph Daleiden heads the Midwest Coalition to Reform Immigration and his web site is: www.enteract.com/~mcri97.
- Glenn Spencer leads Voices of Citizens Together and their web site is www.instanet.com/~vct.
- *People and Place* is a journal published by the Centre for Population and Urban Research at Monash University in Australia. They can be reached at www.swin.edu.au/sbs/pub/pnp.
- *Mankind Quarterly* — mankind.org.
- The Aztlan Organization is at aztlan.org.
- fedpub.com/immigration brings up Federal Publications, Inc. which has a sub-heading for developments in immigration law.
- The American Immigration Lawyers Association hosts a site at aila.org/home.htm.

- cofcc.org reaches the Council of Conservative Citizens.

- lra.com/swtaboo/index.html is based on Garrett Hardin's idea of "stalking the wild taboo."

- "Immigration by the Numbers" continues the thrust of Roy Beck's video at numbersusa.com.

- amren.com reaches American Renaissance.

- *Politically Incorrect — An On-line Magazine* is at cyad.com/cvgi-bin/pinc/july97/index.html.

E-mail addresses for pertinent organizations:

- fair@fairus.org The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR)

- center@cis.org Center for Immigration Studies (CIS)

- 103527.3545@compuserve.com Negative Population Growth (NPG)

- ccn@igc.apc.org Carrying Capacity Network (CCN)

- caps@calweb.com Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS)

- Philip Martin of *Migration News* can be reached at migrant@primal.ucdavis.edu

- And, of course, THE SOCIAL CONTRACT's e-mail address: soccon@freeway.net.

Affirmative Action Update

Writer Jim Robb's article for the Winter 1995-1996 issue of THE SOCIAL CONTRACT (Vol. VI, No.2) has opened significant debate on the issue of affirmative action for immigrants. Add your comments at a web site dedicated to that topic: www.netcom.com/~jimrobb. **TSC**

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