

OPEN FORUM

Legal immigrants welcome

It's the 'illegal' in illegal alien that's the problem

Editor:

In response to Patrick Endres' letter printed July 27 in *The Aegis* and entitled "Immigrants Vital to U.S.", I would submit that once again, the debate is not one of immigration but one of illegal immigration.

We do not have to revisit the sins of our ancestors during the Mexican American War to justify the current failure of our government officials to enforce the rule of law across the land. When a permanent underclass of people living in the shadows of our society is not only allowed but encouraged, the country as a whole suffers. The people who are in this country illegally are exploited by employers and landlords as they seek to avoid detection by the authorities. The citizens are harmed as they compete for a scarce number of jobs and suffer the effects of wage deflation due to the "cheap labor pool" comprised of those here illegally.

Citizens of Maryland are further hurt by such benefits as in-state tuition for those that do not have legal status in this country. There is increased competition for that ever diminishing revenue dollar used to fund education.

My challenge to Mr. Endres is: where does the citizen of Maryland go for the scholarship funds when they are being used instead to fund such programs as in-state tuition for illegal immigrants? The Maryland Distinguished Scholarship Program is being phased out over the next couple of years. How is that justified when another whole group of people is being awarded such an expensive subsidy?

We face serious challenges as a state and country

these days. Encouraging another benefit to be given to illegal immigrants does not encourage prosperity, does not make us a better society. It makes us a lawless one.

And what is the message to those legal immigrants who have jumped through the hoops, followed the letter of law and achieved the cherished status of citizenship?

Forget it, in Maryland, because we reward the illegal behavior. Renounce your citizenship and we'll help you pay for your college education. What an outrageous position to take!

When we no longer have respect for the rule of law, when we do not encourage people to follow the path to citizenship by fixing the process, then we descend to a level of corruption and contempt for our laws and our citizens that will only lead to more disastrous consequences.

Let's stop the name calling and confront the problem head on. Grant the young people the in-state tuition benefit which is subsidized by the taxpaying citizens of this state when and only they have applied for their green cards. This new law confers the benefit to them before the application for citizenship. The reward should be conferred after the work is done, not before. The people of Maryland will have their say at the ballot box and it is only fitting and proper that they do so.

The governor of Maryland along with the General Assembly has hung a sign that says "Citizens Need not Apply" and that needs to change to "Legal immigrants are welcome."

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