

Illegal immigration and border control



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Strict Border Policies Would Place Everyone in Harms Way Recent action in the US House of Representatives called for the construction of a wall between Mexico and the United States as a tactic to halt the tide of illegal immigration. This is one more sign of the hysteria that has gripped the country over this issue. Similar plans have called for militarizing the border, adding thousands more agents, and deporting the immigrants that are already here. Although the unchecked flow of immigrants from Mexico into the US does come at a high cost to the US taxpayer, projected enforcement strategies would be even more costly. Strict border control action is far too costly, damages communities, and would result in a dangerous and deadly situation for the people involved.

Attempting to stop the flow of illegal immigrants by militarily patrolling the border with vehicles and agents is not feasible. There are almost 2,000 miles of Mexican border (Strayhorn). To adequately patrol this area would require several agents per mile of border. It would necessitate increasing the size of the Border Patrol to as much as ten times its current level. Additional vehicles and weapons would also need to be procured. The cost of this arrangement would be unaffordable even in good economic times. With the current obligations and the mounting budget deficit, the additional manpower required for strict patrolling of the border is not a realistic option. The US House of Representatives plan to spend \$2.2 billion on a 700-mile wall is also a fiasco (Hendricks). Blocking 700 miles would do nothing to protect the other 1,300 miles and would have underlying negative effects. According to Hendricks, "Leaders in American border communities are saying it will damage local economies and the environment". It would prevent wildlife from crossing on their normal habitat and restrict reasonable

access to local communities. Even if the price tag does not double as some expect, the cost to the environment and communities is far too great.

Selectively patrolling the border at the places most frequently used to cross may have an immediate impact on the flow of people. However, they would seek out other routes that are less noticeable. This would take them across rugged and more dangerous terrain. It would only serve to place the immigrants at risk for their life. Many of these people are just children and should not be forced into a deadly position. Yet, by increasing security at selected points we are forcing them to take deadly chances.

The argument is not about whether we have an immigrant problem or not. It is generally agreed that a large population living outside the social and economic system is detrimental to citizens and aliens alike. The question is how do we enforce the law and deal with the current residents and the people that continue to arrive. Strict military patrols and fences simply are too expensive, destroy the environment, and can not realistically work. Forcing the immigrants to cross where the terrain is dangerous will certainly result in their needless death. The US should find a way to control the problem without the negative aspects that a strict patrol policy would generate.

Works Cited

Hendricks, Tyche. " Border Security or Boondoggle? ." San Francisco Chronicle 26 Feb. 2006. 8 Dec. 2006 .

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