



# Illegal Immigration Explained - Profits & Poverty, Social Security & Starvation

From Deborah White  
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## Why the Federal Government Can't End Illegal Immigration

Illegal immigration into the United States is a highly profitable proposition for both employers and the US government, and it also benefits Mexico, which is the largest source country of undocumented immigrants into the US.

In Fall 2005, the US and Mexican governments are silently, and actively, enticing illegal immigrants to enter this country and to work illegally. Poverty-stricken immigrants respond to the financial enticements...and then are blamed by US citizenry for illegally being in the US.

The purpose of this 4-part article is to explain why the US federal government can't afford and doesn't soon plan to to end illegal immigration.

### Part 1 - United States Borders Are Barely Enforced

Ten million illegal immigrants live in the US, according to estimates by academic and government agencies, although Bear-Stearns investment firm analysts claim that the US illegal immigrant population "may be as high as 20 million people."

About 75% of undocumented immigrants arrive across the US southern border with Mexico, and hail from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia and other Central and South American countries. The bulk...about 50% of all illegals....are Mexican-born people.

Time magazine stated in 2004 that illegal immigration accelerated under the Bush Administration, with the US gaining 3 million additional illegal immigrant residents in 2004. A third of all illegal immigrants in the US live in California. Other states with large illegal populations are, in descending order, Texas, New York, Illinois, Florida and Arizona.

After more than 100 years in existence, President Bush dissolved the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in March 2003 and absorbed it into the new Homeland Security Department, along with FEMA and dozens of other federal agencies created to help citizens and residents.

Until its dissolution, the INS had been part of the Justice Department since 1940, and before that, part of the US Labor Department. After the September 11, 2001 tragedy, the Bush Administration complained that the INS was insufficiently focused on deporting and expelling illegal immigrants, and thus asked that it be transferred to Homeland Security.

The US Border Patrol is charged with the responsibility of enforcing illegal immigration across US borders. Until 2003, the Border Patrol was part of the INS, but was also folded into Homeland Security (as a separate agency from INS).

The massive US intelligence agencies overhaul passed by Congress and signed by President Bush in January 2005 required Homeland Security to hire 10,000 more Border Patrol agents, 2,000 per year starting immediately. The Border Patrol currently employs 9,500 agents who patrol 8,000 miles of border.

But Bush Administration ignored the law mandating the hiring of new agents. Said Congressman John Culberson (R-TX) to CNN's Lou Dobbs, "Unfortunately, the White House ignored the law, and only asked us for 200 more agents. That's unacceptable." Culberson was referring to the federal budget for 2006 in which President Bush provided funds for only 210 new agents, not 2,000 additional agents.

Both houses of Congress worked together twice in 2005 to bypass the White House, and hire 1,500 new Border Patrol agents.....500 shy of that required by law, but far surpassing the mere 210 planned by President Bush.

**The US-Mexico border remains significantly under-patrolled.** On October 7, 2005, 80 members of the House of Representatives sent a letter to the President, calling on him to enforce immigration laws, and deferring consideration of the White House's proposed guest-worker

immigration program. "History has shown that enforcement provisions are ignored and underfunded..." said the Congressional letter.

Meanwhile, Congressman Culberson told CNN's Lou Dobbs on October 7, 2005, "We've got a full-scale war going on our southern border. You don't need to go to Iraq to see a war. We've got widespread lawlessness...We need boots on the ground...ASAP."

## Part 2 - Widespread Poverty and Hunger in Mexico

According to the World Bank, 53% of Mexico's population of 104 million residents live in poverty, which is defined as living on less than \$2 a day. Close to 24% of Mexico's population live in extreme poverty, which means they live on less than \$1 a day.

The bottom 40% of Mexican households share less than 11% of the country's wealth. Millions live in extreme poverty, and children are compelled to work on the streets in order to help provide food for their families.

Unemployment in Mexico is realistically estimated near 40%, and there are no government unemployment benefits. There are also virtually no welfare benefits to provide the basics for poverty-stricken, often-starving women, children and families.

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**Poverty wasn't always as pervasive as it is today in Mexico.** A bit of economic history is in order.....

In 1983, the devaluation of the Mexican peso triggered an explosion of US-owned factories, called maquiladoras, along the Mexican side of the US-Mexico border. Corporations closed thousands of factories within US borders, and relocated them to Mexico to take advantage of cheaper labor costs, few required benefits and legally-acceptable poorer working conditions.

Hundreds of thousands of poor Mexican workers and their families moved to northernmost Mexico to labor in the maquiladoras.

Within ten years, though, those same US corporations closed the maquiladoras, and again relocated factories, this time to Asia, which proffered even cheaper labor costs, no benefits and often abject working conditions acceptable to local governments.

Those hundreds of thousands of Mexican workers in the maquiladoras, and their families, were left with nothing. No benefits, no severance. Nothing.

To complicate economic matters more, Mexico's 1994-95 privatization of its banking and telecommunications industries thrust millions more into poverty with increased consumer prices, rising unemployment and wage and benefit cuts.

Mexico's massive privatizations in 1994-95 also created a new privileged class of home-grown millionaires and billionaires. As of 2002, Mexico ranked fourth in the world in billionaires, behind the US, Japan and Germany.

To summarize thusfar, millions of Mexican families live in soul-stripping poverty...unemployed, hungry, without healthcare...and the US border with Mexico is significantly under-enforced.

## Part 3 - US Employers Routinely Hire Illegal Immigrants, With Little Penalty

In March 2005, Wal-Mart, a company with \$285 billion in annual sales, was fined \$11 million for having untold hundreds of illegal immigrants nationwide clean its stores.

"The federal government boasts it's the largest of its kind. But for Wal-Mart, it amounts to a rounding error---and no admittance of wrongdoing since it claims it didn't know its contractors hired the illegals" wrote the Christian Science Monitor on March 28, 2005.

"If it weren't so easy for illegals and employers to skirt worker ID verification, the settlement's requirement that Wal-Mart also improve hiring controls might have a ripple effect in corporate America. but the piddling fine will hardly deter businesses from hiring cheap labor from a pool of illegals that's surged by 23 percent since 2000....But enforcement is pathetically inadequate, especially since 9/11."

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 provides for sanctions against businesses that hire undocumented workers, which means workers without proper identification. The legislation was enacted once Mexico-US border maquiladoras run by US corporations began closing, and those workers streamed across the border, searching for jobs of any kind.

**But here's the rub.** In 1999, under President Bill Clinton, the US government collected \$3.69 million in fines from 890 companies for employing undocumented workers. In 2004, under President George Bush, the federal government collected \$188,500 from 64 companies for such illegal employment practices. And in 2004, the Bush Administration levied NO fines for US companies employing undocumented workers.

In 21st-century America, it's an unspoken agreement between employer, the undocumented employee and the federal government: **the employee provides acceptable ID that appears authentic, the employer asks no questions, and the US government looks the other way.** Fake ID...Social Security cards, US permanent residency cards (i.e. "green cards"), US temporary employment authorization cards....are readily available for about \$100 to \$200 in every major American city, and plenty of smaller ones, too.

Wrote reporter Eduardo Porter in an April 5, 2005 New York Times article, "Currently available for about \$150 on street corners in just about any

immigrant neighborhood in California, a typical fake ID package includes a green card and a Social Security card. It provides cover for employers, who, if asked, can plausibly assert that they believe all their workers are legal."

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### Why would employers hire undocumented workers?

According to Catholic priest Dr. Daniel Groody, Associate Professor at University of Notre Dame and a director of the university's Center for Latino Studies, "If they make it across the border, most immigrants will work at low-paying jobs that no one except the most desperate wants. They will de-bone chicken in poultry plants, pick crops in fields and build houses in construction."

As one person in Arizona noted, 'It looks like entering the US through the desert as undocumented immigrants is some kind of employment screening test administered by the US government for the hospitality, construction and recreation industries.'

Willing to work at the most dangerous jobs, an immigrant a day will also die in the work place, even while for others the work place has become safer over the last decade."

And undocumented workers, grateful for any job, will work for lower wages and minimal or no benefits, therefore enabling employers to make higher business profits. Cheaper labor costs and lesser working conditions equal greater profits for business owners.

In a January 2005 World Net Daily article, a report by investment firm Bear Stearns was cited that clearly illustrates that millions of US jobs have shifted from the legal workforce "as employers have systematically replaced American workers with lower wage illegal aliens."

For illegal immigrants, it's about finding any work to feed, clothe and shelter their families. For employers, it's about profits.

**But why would the US government look the other way**, allowing employers to replace American workers with undocumented workers from other countries?

"...experts blame the twin pressures of ethnic advocacy and business interests" reports the Christian Science Monitor.

Translation....**"ethnic advocacy" means buying favor....and votes....within the illegal immigrant community.** If an immigrant doesn't vote, he/she has relatives who do. In the 21st century, Hispanics surpassed African-Americans as the largest ethnic group in the United States. Many believe that the Bush Administration's lack of immigration enforcement in 2004 was directly connected to the Republican Party's goal to court the Hispanic vote, and to entice Hispanics to join Republican ranks.

Translation...**"business interests" means profits.** When labor costs are lower, business profits are higher. When thousands of businesses have higher profits, then the US business community is stronger (and happier). More votes and more voter perception of success.

A major economic drawback, though, to allowing thousands...probably millions...of US businesses to pay under-market wages and benefits to undocumented workers is that it depresses wages for all workers in the US. All Americans workers, then have decreased incomes, lower benefits and higher rates of poverty and hunger.

An obvious moral drawback to allowing US businesses to pay under-market, lower than even minimum wage rates, is that it's wrong. Minimum wage and standard minimal working conditions are established to humanely provide for the safety and welfare of all workers...not just American-born workers. It's a matter of decency and human rights, rooted in the United States' Christian-Judeo heritage. It's wrong and exploitative, and it's immoral. It's an updated form of economic slavery.

Writes Dr. Groody, "Immigrants die cutting North Carolina tobacco and Nebraska beef, chopping down trees in Colorado, welding a balcony in Florida, trimming grass at a Las Vegas golf course, and falling from scaffolding in Georgia...."

With an economic gun at their backs, they leave their homes because hunger and poverty pushes them across the border....Every day, immigrants dehydrate in deserts, drown in canals, freeze in mountains and suffocate in tractor trailers. As a result, the death toll has increased 1,000 percent in some places."

And there's one more reason why would the US government would look the other way, thus allowing US employers to replace American workers with undocumented workers from other countries. A huge, seemingly insurmountable reason. A \$7 billion a year problem: Social Security.

### Part 4 - Undocumented Workers Give \$7 Billion Annually to Social Security

According to a New York Times article on April 5, 2005, "...the estimated seven million or so illegal immigrant workers in the United States are now providing the system with a subsidy of as much as \$7 billion a year....Moreover, the money paid by illegal immigrants and their employers is factored into all the Social Security Administration's projections."

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However,since illegal immigrant workers are here illegally, and ostensibly presented fake ID to the US employer, **they will never collect Social**

**Security benefits.** "For illegal immigrants, Social Security numbers are simply a tool needed to work on this side of the border. Retirement does not enter the picture," reports the New York Times.

The Social Security Administration remains solvent in large part due to deductions taken from the paychecks of illegal immigrant workers, yet Social Security will never pay benefits to those workers. The workers pay in, but they never receive back.

**Wouldn't the federal government detect fake Social Security numbers?** According to that April 6, 2005 New York Times article, "Starting in the late 1980s, the social Security Administration received a flood of W-2 earnings reports with incorrect---sometimes simply fictitious---Social Security numbers. It stashed them in what it calls the 'earnings suspense file' in the hope that someday it would figure out whom they belonged to. The file has been mushrooming ever since: \$189 billion worth of wages ended up recorded in the suspense file over the 1990s, two and a half times the amount of the 1980s.

In the current decade, the file is growing, on average, by more than \$50 billion a year, generating \$6 billion to \$7 billion in Social Security tax revenue and about \$1.5 billion in Medicare taxes.

...the mismatched W-2's fit like a glove on illegal immigrants' known geographic distribution and the patchwork of jobs they typically hold. An audit found that more than half of the 100 employers filing the most earnings reports with false social Security numbers from 1997 through 2001 came from just three states: California, Texas and Illinois."

As shown by this information, **the federal bureaucracy clearly knows which companies employ probable illegal immigrant workers**, and it even knows which workers are likely illegals.

**And the government does nothing about it.** Not one penalty was levied by the federal government against an employer in 2004 for hiring undocumented workers.

## SUMMARY

The equation to explain the whys of illegal immigration into the US is simple:

**Add:** Widespread abject poverty and starvation in Mexico after US corporations relocated their cheap-labor plants from the US-Mexico border to Asia, and after Mexican banks and telecommunications were privatized, creating dozens of instant billionaires and plunging millions into poverty.

**Add:** An extremely porous, under-enforced US-Mexico border.

**Add:** US employers anxious for more profits, and willing to exploit the poverty and fears of illegal immigrants to do so.

**Add:** The federal government anxious to curry favor with , and garner votes from, business owners and the Hispanic community...thus, willing to under-enforce borders and immigrations laws, and ignore illegal hiring by employers.

**Add:** The Social Security Administration dependent on taking in \$7 billion annually of contributions from illegal immigrant workers who will never receive benefits from the system.

**THE RESULT:** Millions of illegal immigrants working for low wages and in poor working conditions, grateful for "scraps to fall from the US table of prosperity," per Dr. Groody.

Wealthier US businesses, and a much richer Social Security Administration, neither which reimburse local and state authorities and taxpayers for the costs (education, health care, law enforcement and more) associated with illegal immigrants.

And a very angry US citizenry, who vilify immigrants for being here, rather than blaming the business owners who hire and exploit them, the US government which lets them enter the US and profits greatly from them, and the Mexican government which is happy to see them immigrate out of their country.

"Our nation virtually posts two sign on its southern border: 'Help Wanted: Inquire Within' and 'Do Not Trespass,'" says Pastor Robin Hoover of Humane Borders.

"Without the help of immigrant labor, the US economy would virtually collapse. We want and need cheap immigrant labor, but we do not want the immigrants."

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