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Illegal Immigrants in the Construction Industry

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## Illegal Immigrants in the Construction Industry

Solutions to the illegal immigrant issues in the United States are wide ranging. Every portion of the populace has a different opinion that varies from it not being an issue to rage. This paper addresses the alternatives that I came up with.

### Work Permits

Illegal immigration in the construction industry is plaguing the US. One possible solution to the crises is to issue work permits to alien workers. This solution maybe the most practical, there is a high demand for labor in construction and the supply of workers is low. The US does give work permits to immigrants; however, the primarily give it to educated individuals. USCIS (United States Citizen and Immigration Services) formally known and INS (Immigration and Naturalization Services) now part of the Department of Homeland Security has list on its website that in order apply for a work permit to the US, one must satisfy as an specialty occupation. The website description of “[a] specialty occupation requires theoretical and practical application of a body of specialized knowledge along with at least a bachelor’s degree or its equivalent.” (USCIS, 2007) Construction workers and labors do not satisfy these strict criteria. The process to get a work permit to the US must be made easier and more obtainable. Additionally, according to the USCIS website sites that “current law limits to 65,000 the number of aliens who may be issued a visa.” (USCIS, 2007) 65,000 workers would not meet the demands in the construction industry alone. If work permits could be issued, illegal immigration would decrease, a monitoring device would be setup to help control undesirable entering the country, workers will be paying taxes, and a better census will be available to help calculate the amount to workers present in the country. Work permits must be issued, and it must be issued in an easy, timely, and efficient manner.

### Citizenship based upon work history and job hours

Allowing illegal immigrant's citizenship based upon prior work history and current job hours, including work attendance and length of time of the job is another possible alternative to solving the illegal alien problem. It would be important to use the requirements analysis problem solving tool to construct what requirements to be met before qualifying for citizenship.

Specifically these requirements would be work attendance, job hours, and job history.

Citizenship would be given to those illegal immigrants who worked the most, demonstrated impeccable attendance, and had the longest history working for the same company. These criteria would serve to show the United States government the willingness of the individual to become a working part of the economy and a willingness to pay taxes like all other United States citizens. Citizenship would also be granted based upon the aliens willingness to have learned English as that would demonstrate further that the individual was willing to become an American and a useful citizen. Job attendance is an important criteria because it show the seriousness and personal motivation of the individual which is more of an asset to the United States workforce than someone who jumps around from job to job and has a lot of sick days. Length of time on the job also shows the individual is stable and working toward building security and stability instead of just coming to the United States and joining the welfare system. This situation would be a huge undertaking to implement, however, it has the potential to become a win-win situation for the American government as well as the typical business owner usually forced to hire illegal immigrants. Specifically targeting construction companies, particularly small businesses are the place to start as these are the companies that usually hire illegal immigrants.

## Military Service

The military of the United States is a diverse and unique service compared to others like it around the world. The Russian military is mostly made up of Russians. The British army is almost one hundred percent British. The French army is French, and so on and so on. But if you look at the US Military it is a diverse and multi-ethnic force.

The makeup of the military is diverse. It is made up of soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines from African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, Native American and much other cultural diversity. The fact that it is such a diverse force benefits the nation.. But what are the costs of recruiting from outside of our country? Why is the government trying to increase recruitment of illegal aliens?

“A senior US defense officials today [urged](#) the Congress to fast track a section of the stalled immigration bill that would allow the military to recruit illegal aliens, after recruitment figures released by Pentagon showed that the Army [failed](#) to reach its targets for May.”(Canada IFP, 2007) Our government is pushing the use of illegal immigrant to fill the ranks of our army and other branches due to low enlistment. You may ask what the incentives are for these potential recruits? The answer is a fast track to citizenship. By doing this are we hurting our country. Is this the right idea or should other measures be taken. The decision is up to our law makers now but we should all know what is being done in our country no matter what.

## Holding Employers Accountable

Holding employers accountable for the hiring of illegal aliens has been a highly debated topic in recent times. Almost every person has an opinion and there are very few on the fence. With such a controversial topic, one would presume that this would be a high priority for the duly elected officials.

The United States Congress recently failed to act on an Immigration Reform Bill that was up for vote. The bipartisan Immigration Reform Bill has safeguards for the hiring of illegal immigrants. The bill increased penalties for employers who hired illegal workers. The maximum criminal penalty increased from \$3,000 per alien to \$ 75, 000 per alien. The maximum civil fine for first offenders will rise from \$2,000 to \$5,000. The maximum civil fine for three-time offenders will jump from \$10,000 to \$25,000. The bill imposes tougher legal standards on employers, making it easier to prosecute businesses that hire and continue to employ illegal aliens. (White House, 2007)

The number of employers prosecuted for unlawfully employing immigrants dropped from 182 in 1999 to four in 2003. In 1999, the United States initiated fines against 417 companies. In 2004, it issued fine notices to three companies. (Washington Post, 2006)

Earlier this month, Prince William County, Virginia moved to enact laws that denied services to illegal immigrants. These included medical care and public education. County schools and agencies would be required to verify the immigration status of anyone using county services.

Seventy percent of small business owners think that illegal immigration a "very serious" or "serious" problem, according to a survey by the National Federation of Independent Business. Some business owners don't want a plan that that would punish them for unknowingly hiring illegal workers. Business owners who follow the law are routinely victimized by competitors who hire cheap, illegal labor. (Povich, 2007)

#### Blanket Amnesties

Amnesties they have come with promises that "this will be the last...from now on we'll be enforcing our border security." No serious effort has ever been made to keep any of those

promises, so Americans are leery of amnesty programs. If Americans believe that this is an amnesty program, it will be harder to get public support.

So is the proposal something different from a blanket amnesty? If it is said that "blanket" means "with no exceptions" we might be able to stretch the point to say this is something different. But amnesty for eight million criminal aliens is still a huge amnesty, with most of the same problems as the "blanket" variety.

The mostly minimum wage employees would further drain our welfare and healthcare systems. While it may be hard to find Americans who want the low-wage jobs, if the demand for workers continues the market will bring the wages up until employees can be attracted. With an unlimited supply of bottom dollar workers, that will never happen.

The program would encourage thousands or millions more Mexican immigrants to continue the fracturing of our culture into English and Spanish speaking segments. We are a long way from assimilating the huge backlog of legal immigrants already in our country. If the trend continues, our society will be permanently divided.

The claim that amnesty will improve security is an insult to our intelligence. Terrorists among the criminal aliens who want to stay on our side of the border will simply not seek the amnesty. They will be exactly as safe as they ever were.

#### Conclusion

These alternatives are just a few of many. This is such a large national issue that all of these alternatives play a part in the solution. The team arrived at a solution for each alternative but realized that it would not stand the trial of implementation on a stand-alone basis.

There are many influences that will affect whatever decision is made. Political pressure to win votes, religious fervor, cultural mores, nationalism, are but a few. The United States will have to pull together as a nation and determine what is right for this country.

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