

Short Takes by George McClellan

Fear of Immigration

I had occasion recently to see an Aug. 2009 newspaper clipping reporting on a Mexican boycott of businesses in Victoria, Texas. Specifically, the local Mexican population had decided to boycott all white owned businesses in the town for a month over some pending immigration legislation. Their idea was to demonstrate how big an impact the loss of local Mexican trade would be if they all left. The Mexicans declared the boycott to be a success with revenues down 19%. Well, on the other side of the coin, so did the merchants declare the boycott a success, because, they said, shoplifting was down 77%, money orders to Mexico were down by 97% and the expense of daily cleanup and trash collection was down by 84%. Shoppers said they heard English only spoken for the first time in recent memory and business was conducted with real money, not government food stamps or debit cards. Wow! Such a deal! It even seems to be occurring in all of Arizona now as well.

The boil on America's neck regarding illegal immigration was forced to a head by Arizona's brave action in implementing its own version of the Federal Law, because the Federal Government won't do it. It should focus us on exactly how we should define the term 'immigrant' and how to apply it. Once, most all immigrants came into the US by way of the tedious Ellis Island or similar route. Our neighbors to the south wandered across the borders on foot, if they didn't drown wading across the Rio Grande River (hence the term "wet backs"), but mostly, they came and went as the agricultural seasons dictated. A program was established whereby documented farm workers called "Braceros" were allowed in to follow the growing seasons harvests. These folks, often with their families, were provided housing, medical care and food paid for by their employers. As a youth working in the summer to earn money for myself, I worked with braceros and came to know many of them personally. They came to work! They did not come to transport or sell drugs, transport slaves, or to rob and steal from Americans.

Americans should no longer be willing to accept illegals here simply for a free ride. The argument that all Americans are immigrants misses the point that they all came through Ellis Island or other similar points of entry, looking to make a new life for themselves. Upon arrival, they dedicated themselves to becoming Americans, accepting English as their language and the Stars and Strips as their flag. They didn't cling to their former country's national banner demanding all other Americans should respect it. Neither did they come here to trash our Judeo-Christian bible demanding that all Americans respect their written word as the definitive word of God and their beliefs to trump Americans customs. Neither did they come here to blow up our buildings, shoot up our people and subvert our college and university students into mindless slaves of some weird, bearded 13th century religious leader intent on the destruction of America.

Our earlier immigrants, including those from Mexico, proudly wore the uniforms of the US Military. They willingly fought and died on foreign shores and sacrificed their all simply because they freely accepted the hard earned premise that "they were Americans". They expected no handouts from government, only a fair chance to earn their way up the ladder of success. Their children assimilated and they brought prosperity to our country, unlike the freeloaders of today. Sit up Americans and pay attention. Very soon you won't recognize this place at all. Should we fear illegal immigration? You bet! Go get 'em! (17 May 10)