

Let's Make Up Our Mind on Illegal Immigration

By Glenn Grothman

Our current illegal immigration policy in the United States is a mess. The percentage of foreign-born people in the United States is the highest it has been in decades – twelve percent. An estimated 10 million illegal immigrants are currently in the country. This is trouble in that illegal immigrants drive down wages of native Americans, are 50 percent more likely than native Americans to take advantage of at least one welfare programs, and are far less likely to pay taxes.

Worse, it is good if the primary loyalty of people in America is to America. It is hard to maintain this notion with such a huge influx of new workers. Furthermore, we do maintain federal agencies to enforce our immigration laws and we do have law-abiding foreigners waiting patiently in line, sometimes for years, to get in the country. It is an insult to border patrol and immigration employees as well as legal immigrants to continue the current policy.

Unfortunately, our state government has decided to offer new low-interest loans to non-citizens through the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority – WHEDA. WHEDA loans were originally designed to be government guaranteed loans at slightly below market rates for lower income Wisconsin residents. Who could ever guess these loans would go to recent immigrants through a program specifically designed for people without social security numbers?!! In order to be eligible for the program you must have an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number – ITIN – issued to people who may pay taxes but are not citizens and are frequently illegal.

Ricardo Diaz, the executive director of the United Community Center, praised Governor Doyle saying, “This is a hard working community that represents significant purchasing power, this is very smart of the governor.” It is true many immigrants, including illegal immigrants, are hard working. But why have any immigration law or border patrol at all if we are going to have government programs specifically providing low-income loans to illegal immigrants? How can the government in good conscience prosecute an employer who hires an illegal immigrant if that same illegal person earlier in that day was given a special government guaranteed special low-interest loan?

I don't mean to solely pick on Governor Doyle here. WHEDA is actually governed by a board – 6 of the 11 members are either Republican legislators or Republican appointees. They ought to step up to the plate and end this program.

It should also be pointed out that this program wouldn't exist without the approval of the Federal Reserve. Also, the loans are resold on the secondary market through the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (Freddie Mac). Both of these have several board members who are presidential appointees. The stability of these government sponsored but privately held corporations have been questioned by Alan Greenspan. Are these organizations expanding too quickly and if so, why are they dealing with mortgages to illegal immigrants?

Either illegal immigration is illegal or it is not. It's time Governor Doyle tells his appointees on the WHEDA board to pull the plug. While President Bush does not have direct control of Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, his appointees should weigh in here. I will ask the two Republican legislators on the WHEDA board to bring this matter up and if nothing is done, I will introduce legislation in January to repeal this program.

Please let me know what you think on this issue. Contact me here in Madison---please call 1-888-534-0058, or in any of the following ways:

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