



An interdisciplinary institute  
of Hanover College established in 1997

# Inquiries®

The publication from the Center for Free Inquiry®

## Good Fences Make . . .

As *Inquiries* goes to press, the U.S. Congress has just approved the construction of a 700-mile “fence” along the (roughly 2100 miles of the) country’s border with Mexico. And Congress even authorized some funds to get it started, although far, far more will be required to finish it. (It is difficult even to hazard a guess at what the final cost will be.)

If the public response to this decision is any indication, this may be among the most contentious things that this very contentious Congress has done. A Yahoo search on “U.S. border fence” yields over half a million hits. Links to all forms of print, broadcast, and digital media represent every segment of American society and every logically and emotionally possible response to the fence. We are, as a nation, much concerned with who we let in.

There is an easy and rather trite explanation for this fervor. We are, it is often said, a “nation of immigrants.” There is a truth in this claim: we *are* a nation created by immigrants. But this truth

*Continued on page 2*

## Put Away Childish Things Mass Immigration vs. Modern America

by Mark Krikorian

Mark Krikorian is Executive Director of the Center for Immigration Studies. He frequently testifies before Congress and has published numerous articles and appeared on several TV and radio news programs. Mr. Krikorian holds a master’s degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and spent two years at Yerevan State University in then-Soviet Armenia.

“It’ll all work out.”

This is where arguments in favor of mass immigration usually end up. As it becomes impossible to deny the mounting evidence of harm done to American society by the ongoing settlement of more than 1.5 million people from abroad each year, supporters of current policy fall back on, “that’s what they said about the Irish and the Italians and the Jews, and that turned out fine.” Michael Barone wrote a book a while back called *The New Americans* which makes exactly that point.

And Barone is right that today’s immigrants are similar to those of the past. Whether they’re from Sicily or Michoacan, Ukraine or Fujian, both yesterday’s and today’s immigrants mainly came from rural or small-town backgrounds, in traditional societies just beginning to develop.

What has changed is *us*. The changes caused by modernization

over the past century have so altered our society, like all other advanced societies, as to make it virtually unrecognizable, creating a difference in kind rather than degree. And mass immigration is especially problematic in this kind of society. It undermines many of the objectives that our modern, middle-class society sets for itself and exacerbates many of the problems brought on by modernization. In short, mass immigration is incompatible with the goals and characteristics of a modern society.

The social changes that we call modernization are hard to miss. For instance, a century ago what economists call the “primary sector” of the economy (farming, fishing, hunting, herding, etc.) still employed more workers than any other, as it had since before the dawn of man. Today, only 2 percent of our workforce occupies itself in this way. Meanwhile, the “tertiary sector” (service industry)

*Continued on page 2*

## Good Fences Make . . .

*Continued from page 1*

often obscures an important way in which this claim is false. Most of us were born here, and into families that had been here for generations. We are thoroughly of this place, and we have little difficulty distinguishing between ourselves and the new arrivals.

So we feel threatened, and guilty. And this leads to actions that are fraught with all sorts of unfortunate symbolism—like a big fence.

But beneath all the emotional symbolism are real matters of concern. Immigration into the U.S., legal and illegal, has reached flood stage. We would do well to reflect soberly and with a clear view of the facts, such as they can be discerned, on the challenges this poses for our social and political and economic institutions.

The contributors to this issue of *Inquiries* bring different but valuable perspectives to this debate. And both offer a much needed alternative to the fulminations emanating from all directions.

John Ahrens

John Ahrens is Professor of Philosophy at Hanover College and an Associate Director of the Center for Free Inquiry.

## Put Away Childish Things Mass Immigration vs. Modern America

*Continued from page 1*

now employs 80 percent of working Americans, and this is climbing.

All other measures of modernization point to the same basic

change in society: urbanization, mass education, women's equality, higher life expectancy, lower infant mortality, etc. Other changes are harder to quantify, but just as real: increased religious skepticism, a greater sense of responsibility for the less fortunate, rejection of racial and religious discrimination. These changes have

## These social changes marking national adulthood don't mean that mass immigration was out of place during our national adolescence.

brought both benefits and costs, but whatever we might do to ameliorate the harmful side effects, modernization itself is irreversible, because people don't want it to be reversed; anyone who has spent time in a pre-modern village understands that Marx's observation about "the idiocy of rural life" has more than a little truth to it. Or, in the words of the popular World War I song, "How Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm After They've Seen Parem?"

These social changes marking national adulthood don't mean that mass immigration was out of place during our national adolescence. America ended up a stronger nation because of the mass-immigration phase of our national development, a phase that extended for 70-odd years until the early 1920s. Had we not experienced that period of mass immigration, our population, derived mainly from descendants of a relatively small number of pre-independence settlers, would still have grown

rapidly, but it would have been only about half the size of today's. The first part of the immigration phase, dominated by northern Europeans, helped settle much of the land, until the frontier was declared closed in 1890. The latter part of our nation's adolescent immigration phase was dominated by immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe who settled in the cities and contributed mightily to industrialization.

The fact that America had outgrown mass immigration was central to the debate over ending it, which was finally resolved by the 1921 and 1924 immigration laws. And even when a fundamental overhaul of the immigration law was debated in the 1960s, culminating in the 1965 immigration law, everyone involved readily asserted that the changes would be purely cosmetic, and that although getting rid of the national origin quotas was important for moral and foreign-policy reasons, there was no intention to return America to a bygone phase in its national life.

But despite these claims, the 1965 immigration law marked the beginning of a whole new immigration wave. The total foreign-born population has ballooned to more than 35 million in 2005. Annual legal immigration—which means the number of people awarded permanent residency—has gone from about 300,000 in 1965 to about 1 million in 2005. And illegal immigration has become a major phenomenon, with today's illegal population totaling perhaps 12 million, and growing by around half a million each year.

One last figure will suggest the magnitude of what was ignited in 1965: Fully one-third of all the

people ever to settle in the United States, starting from the first Siberian to cross the Bering Land Bridge in search of game, have arrived since 1965.

How does mass immigration conflict with the new kind of society that modernity has created? A discussion of two broad areas of incompatibility will illustrate the conflict.

### Economics

The economic goal of a modern society is to maintain a large middle class through high-wage, knowledge- and capital-intensive jobs exhibiting growing labor productivity and aiming toward a flatter distribution of income. Mass immigration subverts these goals.

The central reason for this is that mass immigration will necessarily consist of people with relatively little education. Although some highly educated people do leave their countries to settle here, our current immigration policy, as well as any real-world alternative featuring high levels of admissions, necessarily yields a poorly educated immigration flow. In 2005, about 8 percent of native-born Americans had less than a high-school degree, compared with 30 percent of the foreign-born, and immigrants make up about 40 percent of all high-school dropouts in the labor market. In fact, just those immigrants who've arrived in the past 15 years account for almost one-quarter of all the dropouts in the labor market.

The disparity between immigrants and natives is growing and is not caused by recent arrivals just getting started. In 1970, established immigrants (those who had already lived in the United States

between 10 and 20 years) were substantially less likely to live in or near poverty than natives; by 2000, this was completely reversed. Established immigrants' rate of home ownership has consistently declined for three decades, and the gap in high-school completion rates between natives and established immigrants has been growing steadily.

And these problems do not affect immigrants alone. Harvard's George Borjas has calculated that immigration reduced the wages of native-born Americans with less than a high-school education by

---

**One need not be a socialist to sense that this growing, immigration-induced gap between rich and poor is moving us away from the society we want.**

---

more than 7 percent from 1980 to 2000. These lost wages were redistributed upward to more-skilled workers and owners of capital (through slightly lower prices and slightly higher returns), creating a tiny net benefit to the economy. We are thus begging the poor for the benefit of the rest of us, thereby increasing income disparity and contributing to what Michael Lind has called the "Brazilianization" of our society. In California, the state most heavily impacted by the current immigration wave, real wages for the top tenth of male workers grew 13 percent from 1969 to 1997, while the bottom quarter saw its wages fall 40 percent during the same period. The Public Policy Institute of California found that the leading causes of this phe-

nomenon were the increasing share of immigrants in the workforce and falling wages for less-educated men in general (itself partly caused, as we have seen, by an abundance of low-skilled immigrant labor).

One need not be a socialist to sense that this growing, immigration-induced gap between rich and poor is moving us away from the society we want. Mass immigration in fact is moving us backward toward a master-servant plantation-style economy, more reminiscent of the old Rhodesia than of the modern, middle-class commercial republic we imagine ourselves to inhabit.

And the industries which make heavy use of these immigrant workers also develop in ways inconsistent with modernity. By holding down natural wage growth in labor-intensive industries, immigration serves as a subsidy for low-wage, low-productivity industries, retarding technological progress and productivity growth. That this is so should not be a surprise. Julian Simon, in his 1981 classic, *The Ultimate Resource*, wrote about how scarcity leads to innovation:

It is important to recognize that discoveries of improved methods and of substitute products are not just luck. They happen in response to "scarcity"—an increase in cost. Even after a discovery is made, there is a good chance that it will not be put into operation until there is need for it due to rising cost. This point is important: Scarcity and technological advance are not two unrelated competitors in a race; rather, each influences the other.

As it is for copper or oil, this fact is true also for labor; as wages have risen over time, innovators have devised ways of substituting capital for labor, increasing productivity to the benefit of all. The converse, of course, is also true; the artificial superabundance of a resource will tend to remove much of the incentive for innovation.

Stagnating innovation is perhaps most apparent in the most immigrant-dependent activity—the harvest of fresh fruit and vegetables. The period from 1960 to 1975 (roughly from the end of the “Bracero” program, which imported Mexican farmworkers, to the beginning of the mass illegal immigration we are still experiencing today) was a period of considerable agricultural mechanization. But a continuing increase in the acreage and number of crops harvested mechanically did not materialize as expected, in large part because the supply of workers remained artificially large due to the growing illegal immigration we were politically unwilling to stop.

An example of a productivity improvement that “will not be put into operation until there is need for it due to rising cost,” as Simon said, is in raisin grapes. The production of raisins in California’s Central Valley is one of the most labor-intensive activities in North America. Conventional methods require bunches of grapes to be cut by hand, manually placed in a tray for drying, manually turned, manually collected.

But starting in the 1950s in Australia (where there was no large supply of foreign farm labor), farmers were compelled by circumstances to develop a labor-saving method called “dried-on-

the-vine” (DOV) production. This involves growing the grape vines on trellises, then, when the grapes are ready, cutting the base of the vine instead of cutting each bunch of grapes individually. This new method radically reduces labor demand at harvest time and increases yield per acre by up to 200 percent. But this high-productivity, innovative method of production has not been widely adopted in the United States because the mass availability of foreign workers has served as a disincentive to farmers to make the necessary capital investment.

In manufacturing, too, a scarcity of low-skilled labor yields innovation, while a surfeit yields stagnation. An example of the latter: A 1995 report on Southern California’s apparel industry, prepared by Southern California Edison, warned that “overreliance on relatively low-cost sources of labor may now cost the industry dearly.” Because of immigration, the industry has fallen behind even some of its lowest labor-cost competitors in implementing new technologies.

Conversely, home builders, who are still less reliant on foreign workers, have begun to modernize construction techniques. The higher cost of labor means that “In the long run, we’ll see a move toward homes built in factories,” as Gopal Ahluwalia, director of research at the National Association of Home Builders, told *The Washington Post*. But as immigrants increasingly move into this industry, we can expect such innovation to slow significantly.

But surely immigration is needed to fill jobs in the service industry? After all, without immigrants, who will pump our gas?

Oh, wait—we never imported immigrants for that, and so now we pump our own gas, aided by technology that lets us pay at the pump—and thus we have fewer attendants but more gas stations and get in and out faster than we used to when we trusted our car to the man who wore the Texaco star.

### Assimilation

But even the mass immigration of people who were educated, earned middle-class incomes, and didn’t use welfare, would still conflict with modernity. It is characteristic of modern societies that they have great difficulty in assimilating large numbers of newcomers into the model of a territorial nation-state, with a common language and civic culture helping to cultivate the patriotic solidarity necessary for both mutual sacrifice and respect for individual rights.

This difficulty with assimilation has two causes, one technological, the other ideological. As to the first: When combined with modern transportation and communications technology, mass immigration fosters the creation of transnational communities which undermine national sovereignty and cohesion. Immigrants in the past tried to maintain ties with the old country, of course, but the cost and difficulties involved were such that the ties tended to atrophy fairly quickly. As Princeton sociologist Alejandro Portes observes, “Earlier in the twentieth century, the expense and difficulty of long-distance communication and travel simply made it impossible to lead a dual existence in two countries. Polish peasants couldn’t just hop a plane—or make a phone call, for that matter—to check out how

things were going at home over the weekend.” Now they can.

But now, with low-cost long-distance calling and air travel, a transnational life is available to the masses. Wellesley Sociologist

---

### Dual citizenship is the most serious political manifestation of the conflict between modernity and mass immigration.

---

Peggy Levitt has even described what she calls a “transnational village,” split between the original village in the Dominican Republic and its other half in Boston. Political parties operate in both places, people watch the same soap operas, telephone contacts become ever more frequent as rates fall, gossip travels instantly between the two halves of the village, parents in one half try to raise children in the other.

This process, repeated all across America by immigrants from many different countries, is helping transform the United States from a unified nation, which admitted immigrants in order to make them full members of the national community, into merely “one node in a post-national network of diasporas,” in the words of University of Chicago anthropologist Arjun Appadurai.

Indeed, immigration’s role in eroding national cohesion makes it quite desirable for many of its boosters. Portes has written approvingly that “transnationality and its political counterpart, dual citizenship, may not be a sign of imminent civic breakdown but the vanguard of the direction that new

notions of community and society will be taking in the next century.”

Dual citizenship is the most serious political manifestation of the conflict between modernity and mass immigration. Stanley Renshon of the City University of New York has estimated that upwards of 90 percent of immigrants come from countries that permit some form of dual, or even multiple, citizenship. As Renshon, both a political scientist and a certified psychoanalyst, has written:

No country facing divisive domestic issues arising out of its increasing diversity, as America does, benefits from large-scale immigration of those with multiple loyalties and attachments. And no country striving to reconnect its citizens to a coherent civic identity and culture can afford to encourage its citizens to look elsewhere for their most basic national attachments.

These “divisive domestic issues arising out of increasing diversity” point to the second, ideological, reason modern societies have difficulty with assimilation. For whatever reason, all modern nations experience a loss of elite consensus about the meaning and value of their societies, leading to what we’ve come to call culture wars—in the schools, churches, military, and elsewhere—and mass immigration is feeding strangers into the middle of these wars, and requiring them to take sides.

Some conservative boosters of mass immigration wax poetic about the immigrant as an ally in the culture wars. Common sense suggests otherwise. The public schools, invented in the 19th cen-

tury for the purpose of Americanization, are the most important tool in assimilating immigrant families. Friedrich Hayek described this well in *The Constitution of Liberty*: “That the United States would not have become such an effective ‘melting pot’ and would probably have faced extremely difficult problems if it had not been for a deliberate policy of ‘Americanization’ through the public school system seems fairly certain.”

The “deliberate policy” in today’s schools, public or private, is somewhat different, as new research confirms. Portes, with Ruben Rumbaut of Michigan State, recently published *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*, the product of a multi-year longitudinal study of thousands of children of immigrants in San Diego and South Florida. Most interesting for our purposes was their analysis of how these young people identified their nationality, something they were asked when they started high school and again when they were finishing.

When first surveyed, the majority of the students identified themselves as Americans in some form, either as simply “American” or as a hyphenated American (Cuban-American, for instance, or Filipino-American). After four years of American high school, barely one-third still identified themselves as Americans, the majority choosing an identification with no American component at all, opting for either a foreign national-origin identity (Cuban, Filipino) or a pan-ethnic or pan-racial identity (Hispanic, Asian).

Modernity may well accelerate the superficial assimilation of

today's immigrants and their children—learning English, absorbing popular culture, etc. But the modern combination of transnationalism and multiculturalism makes it less likely that they will undergo what Hudson Institute scholar John Fonte calls “patriotic assimilation”—the development of a common sense of American nationhood, a visceral, emotional attachment to their new nation and its people, its institutions, its history.

The most profound question regarding immigration is how it shapes the development of our

society. It seems that mass immigration is fundamentally incompatible with the kind of society we are today and the kind of society we want to be in the future. Many supporters of high immigration, of course, argue the opposite, that it represents the vanguard of modernity. Like the Marxists of old, they argue that the blurring of borders and the decline of the nation-state are forces of nature, immune to human intervention. But if the 20th century has taught us anything, it is that deterministic ideologies are usually wrong. Our immigration

policy is, in fact, the result of choices that can be changed, and should be changed, in order to better reflect the needs and values of modern America.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**March 11, 12, 13, 2007**

*Path To The Law*

**March 27, 2007**

*Politics in the Courts: Judicial Independence and Accountability*

**June 22, 23, 24, 2007**

*The Strenuous Life of Theodore Roosevelt*

For more information about the Center for Free Inquiry  
visit our web site at:

**<http://cfi.hanover.edu>**

## Immigration and American National Identity

by Ruben Navarrette Jr.

Ruben Navarrette Jr. is a columnist and editorial board member of *The San Diego Union-Tribune*. A Harvard graduate, his twice-weekly syndicated column offers new thinking on many of the major issues of the day, especially on thorny questions involving ethnicity and national origin. His book is entitled *A Darker Shade of Crimson: Odyssey of a Harvard Chicano* (1993). He contributed an installment to *Chicken Soup for the Writers Soul*, of the best-selling *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series.

No doubt about it, immigration is the topic of the hour. Look at just the past few weeks: Arizona's Democratic governor, trying to get the upper hand with Republicans in the legislature, issued an executive order to send National Guard troops to the U.S.-Mexico border; the Pew Hispanic Center issued a study saying that there may be as many as 12 million illegal immigrants in the United States, and not 11 million as commonly believed; two border patrol supervisors were arrested near San Diego for taking about \$300,000 in bribes from an immigrant smuggling cartel; Catholic Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles vowed to break the law and urge all the priests in the 288 parishes of the Los Angeles Archdiocese, with its 5 million members, to do the same if Congress retained in its final immigration proposal an obscene provision making it a crime for the Catholic Church and various social service agencies to assist illegal immigrants; a dozen candidates revved up their campaigns to replace disgraced former Republican congressman Randy "Duke" Cunningham by jumping on the bandwagon and promising to get tough on illegal immigration—as long as it doesn't include getting too tough on those businesses that employ illegal immigrants, the businesses owned by the kind of folks who contribute to

Republican candidates.

Well, in the words of the prophet Bob Dylan, "that ain't me babe." The first thing you need to know about me is that while I am fiercely proud to be Mexican (I've been asked, if I wasn't Mexican, what would I be, and I've responded that I'd be embarrassed), I'm also hopelessly an American. I

---

As a self-described Mexican-American, I'm always challenged by immigration restrictionists to prove my allegiance to this country and disavow any loyalty to the country of my ancestors. It's silly. And racist. And offensive.

---

know it from my idealism, my optimism, my sense of entitlement about things like free speech and the ease with which I criticize government officials. Sometimes, when I've done something that doesn't quite fit into the culture, my Mexican-born wife will jokingly ask me, "What kind of Mexican are you?" And I'll respond, "the American kind."

But I also know it from my soft hands. I know it from the fact that, like many Americans, there are plenty of jobs I just won't do. Remember this last point when

you hear why immigrants keep coming. The theories range from the pedestrian to the paranoid to the preposterous. Sometimes you'll hear there's an invasion, and it's all Mexico's fault because it has a corrupt government that can't provide enough opportunities for its own people. If you spend enough time listening to the "midgetmen," those lawn-chair vigilantes hunting Mexicans along the border, you'll even hear about *reconquista* plots where supposedly I and other Mexican-Americans are conspiring with our distant relatives in Mexico to take back the American Southwest.

But wait. Thanks to generations of assimilation, many Mexican-Americans don't even speak Spanish well enough to order the #3 combination plate let alone conspire with Mexicans. And, who says Mexico even wants the Southwest back at this point? Remember that includes Texas—which I bet Mexico would only take back if we tossed in 90 million I-Pods and a Midwestern state to be named later.

As a self-described Mexican-American, I'm always challenged by immigration restrictionists to prove my allegiance to this country and disavow any loyalty to the country of my ancestors. It's silly. And racist. And offensive. It's not a demand you'll see made upon those who are Irish, German, or Italian. In the Midwest or

Northeast, they don't use hyphens, but that doesn't mean they don't think of themselves as belonging to particular ethnic groups.

With Mexicans, it's different. You're talking about a group that represents half of the nation's 40 million Latinos—with Latinos now being the nation's largest minority. Latinos now account for 1 in 7 Americans, and this is expected to swell to 1 in 4 by 2050. Frankly, I doubt that it'll take that long. These numbers frighten a lot of Americans and convince them that it's only a matter of time before they and their children are beaten out for admission to college and better-paying jobs, their towns overrun, and their language, culture, and customs eroded.

---

All across America, from Indiana to Idaho to Iowa, some of the dirtiest, most dangerous, and most dead-end jobs are being done—and done well—by immigrants.

---

Nonsense. Mexican-Americans are just like other Americans. And most Mexican immigrants simply want to be part of America, not recast it as another Mexico. The question is whether Americans will let these immigrants be part of fabric of the country, or whether they intend to keep them as a separate and servant class.

You'll hear all sorts of theories about why so many immigrants come here—legally if possible, illegally if necessary. But, when you boil it down, there's only one reason: it's because I—and millions of Americans like me—have soft hands, and we want to keep it that

way. Every year, when I get my evaluation from my bosses at the newspaper in San Diego, I want two things—more salary, and another week of vacation. More money for less work. That makes sense to you and me, but immigrants don't think that way. They only care about the work.

And that's why—whenever natives and immigrants go head to head, *mano a mano*—in competition for low-end, manual labor jobs, the immigrants wipe the floor with the natives. They're the ones who get snapped up by employers. It's not even close. All across America, from Indiana to Idaho to Iowa, some of the dirtiest, most dangerous, and most dead-end jobs are being done—and done well—by immigrants. From picking peaches in California to slaughtering cattle in Nebraska to prying little pieces of crab out of their shells in Maryland to washing the windows of skyscrapers in Colorado to making beds in hotels in this city and others across the country. When it comes time to divvy up the jobs, immigrants always get to choose last. That much hasn't changed in this country in more than 230 years.

Since I'm not just the grandson of a Mexican immigrant but also the son of a retired cop, my own views on illegal immigration are complicated and nuanced. On the one hand, I'm convinced that immigrants—legal or not—are America's most valuable import. They bring not only a mighty work ethic, but also the optimism that tomorrow will be brighter than today. With all the doom and gloom as the native-born cry in their \$3 cups of coffee about how their government is "selling them out" to globalization and how

America's best days are behind it, we need that optimism today more than ever. Yet, at the same time, I wasn't raised to take lightly things like border security or the breaking of laws.

The trouble is that some of the proposed solutions making their way through Congress—from putting U.S. troops on the border to denying U.S. citizenship to the children of illegal immigrants to building a 2,000-mile wall along the U.S.-Mexican border to letting local cops enforce federal immigration law—bring to mind the old saying about the cure being worse than the disease. In the words of my generation—the X'ers—these ideas are whacked. But try telling that to the House of Representatives where those fire-breathing, chest-beating Republicans recently passed what they want you to believe is a non-nonsense, get-tough, we're-fed-up-and-we're-not-gonna-take-it-any-more immigration enforcement bill. The truth is that the House bill is gutless—at least in one regard. It goes on for hundreds of pages and yet somehow never gets around to addressing the most important and most difficult question of this debate: Beefing up border security to keep the illegal immigrants of tomorrow is swell, but what do we do with the 12 million illegal immigrants who are already here? Those tough guys in the House ducked that question.

The good news is that the grownups in Senate seem ready to take a stab at it. All three of the top bills in the Senate—Cornyn/Kyl, McCain/Kennedy and the new draft legislation proposed by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter—offer some resolution.

Some of what the senators are proposing is workable and wise—and some of it is just wishful thinking. The Cornyn/Kyl bill falls into the second category. While a lot of people talk about creating incentives and disincentives—carrots and sticks—to lure illegal immigrants out of the shadows, this bill is more like sticks and stones. It cops out by simply decreeing that those here illegally must leave and return to their home countries, where they could apply to re-enter the United States through a temporary worker program. And what if people don't leave? Supporters of Cornyn/Kyl insist that they will—if for no other reason than because we will have cracked down on employers to the point where the only people who will be able to find jobs are those who register through the guest worker program. Good luck with that, guys. It's hard to imagine a place where Cornyn/Kyl would actually work, well, aside from Fantasyland.

At least the McCain/Kennedy bill offers workers something tangible – the chance to stay in the United States with permanent residency if they acknowledge the crime of having come here illegally in the first place by paying a \$2,000 fine. The problem is that this is nothing more than amnesty on the installment plan. Now there are plenty of Latinos and Mexican-Americans out there who support amnesty—not a majority based on the polling I've seen but still a healthy number. I'm not one of them. The way I see it, amnesty is more of a problem than a solution. It cheapens the right to reside in the United States legally by granting the privilege en masse. It also lets individuals off the hook by absolving them of their personal

responsibility either to come legally or to take the steps necessary to become legal once they get here. That doesn't come easy, but nothing worth having does.

That leaves us with Specter's bill, over which the Senate Judiciary committee began haggling recently. Specter wants to (1) create a temporary guest worker program that would allow hundreds of thousands of foreign workers to fill jobs in the United States for up to six years; and (2) allow millions of illegal immigrants who are already here to remain indefinitely provided they register with the Department of Homeland Security, pay back taxes, abide by the law, and stay employed.

Here's the problem: Specter's bill leaves the millions of illegal immigrants who are already here in the legal equivalent of suspended animation. They won't have legal residency, or even be on a path to one day achieve it, and so they'll be vulnerable to cheats and scoundrels. I don't want government simply to turn illegal immigrants into citizens or legal residents. But that doesn't mean I want them turned into modern-day slaves.

But for now, let me say this. This much I am sure about—and it brings us to the main theme of these remarks—the debate over illegal immigration is as much about the “immigration” part as it is the “illegal” part. Immigration restrictionists will swear up and down that the only thing that concerns them is illegal immigrants, and that they have no beef with anyone who comes legally. Too often, that's not true. When Rep. Tom Tancredo recently proposed a moratorium on legal immigration and limiting the number of green

cards that are issued and revising of our system of bringing in high-tech—legal—H1-B workers from countries like India and China, or when a group like FAIR (the Federation for American Immigration Reform) acknowledges that they're just as concerned with legal immigration, or when the Center for Immigration Studies says the same thing, arguing that legal immigration feeds illegal immigration when those who come legally try to bring in the rest of their families by any means necessary, or when academics like George Borjas from Harvard make the argument that we now have an inferior class of immigrants, or when average Americans start talking about the importance of people learning English or how immigrants are changing their towns or neighborhoods for the worse, they show their cards. They tell the rest of us that the growing sense of anxiety and fear and anger around the country is not just about who's here illegally but who's here.

You know that this is what the national angst over illegal immigration is really about, right? When someone calls me to complain that San Diego is “becoming like Tijuana,” or when someone says—as a woman in Idaho recently told the Los Angeles Times—that her neighborhood is turning into a Spanish-speaking “shanty town,” or when New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin complains that his city is being “overrun by Mexican workers,” or when someone in Birmingham or Boston or Bismark complains that people aren't learning English fast enough or living ten to a house or frequenting a taco truck that's too close to a residential area or going to cockfights, it's a tell-tale sign that the real

problem for many Americans is not that people are coming illegally, but how they behave once they get here and the effect they're having on their surroundings once they settle in.

This isn't new. I don't care what it says in the brochure. This country of immigrants has never been welcoming to immigrants. And always for the same reason: because immigrants always represent change, and change scares the heck out of many Americans.

Study our history. The Germans and Irish were among the first to come, and then the Italians—and most of them before 1924, when Congress started passing laws to control the number of people who could come from a given region. These people came legally, and, yet oddly enough, they weren't exactly greeted with a red carpet, a parade in their honor, and a steak dinner. They faced bigotry and hatred, and it had nothing to do with their legal status. It was about the language they spoke or the complexion of their skin or the religion they practiced or the size of their families. Occasionally, it was about the fact that they competed for jobs with those Americans who were already here. But just as often it was about the changes they brought to their new country, and the country's attempt to resist having to change. We

even gave it a name: nativism. And we've never really slain that dragon.

Today, interestingly enough, more and more polls show that while many Americans are concerned about the level of immigration, they no longer believe the old chestnut—that immigrants, legal or illegal, take jobs that Americans want to do. We've won that argument. No one believes that anymore—probably because they've gotten a good look at the jobs, the pay, the working conditions, and decided it's not for them. They've also decided they like their country, their towns, and their neighborhoods the way they used to be. And that's not new either.

Ken Mehlman, chairman of the Republican National Committee, and one of my favorite people—gets it. Recently, he was in my neighborhood to speak a gathering of Republican governors about immigration. He told them this: “Throughout our history, there have always been Americans who believed that coming to these shores was a right reserved only for them and for their ancestors, and for no others.” He mentioned Republican Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge who, in 1905, called for immigration restrictions in part because of the effect that an influx of foreigners was having upon “the quality of our citizenship.”

I think about the reader from Bakersfield, California who wrote me recently and put it out there in no uncertain terms. God bless him! He wrote, “You object to the House passed immigration measure, basically because you, as a Hispanic, don't want to see your people refused entry to the United States. You feel ethnic solidarity with Latinos. I understand that. Most people want to live in a community, a nation, where the majority of people are like themselves, racially, ethnically, religiously etc. That is reality, based on biology. It is never going to change. I being a gringo also want to live in a country where people like myself are the majority. Therefore, I oppose ALL immigration to the U.S. because I don't want my native country to become a non-white majority country. I have nothing against Latinos. They are fine people. They are just not “my people.”

At the end of the day, we all want the same thing. We want to matter. We want to be relevant. We want to count for something. And with our surroundings changing so quickly, there have to be moments when we—as native-born Americans—feel as if we don't matter as much as we used to, that we're not the flavor of the month anymore.

And what flavor is that? I'll give you a hint: it's spicy.



**Inquiries**® is the bulletin of the Center for Free Inquiry® at Hanover College. Following the mission of CFI, **Inquiries**® seeks to publish essays that explore fundamental and enduring issues through the lens of the liberal arts.

To submit an essay for consideration, email your manuscript (2,500 to 5,000 words) and a brief bio to [cfi@hanover.edu](mailto:cfi@hanover.edu) or mail one paper copy and one disk copy to Center for Free Inquiry, P.O. Box 108, Hanover, IN 47243-0108.

## ***POLITICS AND THE COURTS: JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY***

**March 27, 2007**

The role of the Courts in our American democracy is a matter of perennial contention. In contemporary U.S. political culture, the Courts have become the focus for all sorts of dissatisfactions with the legal system. Everything from overly lenient sentences for dangerous criminals to questionable interpretations of the Constitution is commonly blamed on the judiciary. This program will examine two important themes in current debates about the role of the judiciary in a democratic society. The first is judicial independence: by protecting judges from political pressure, we hope to limit the intrusion of politics into the resolution of legal and constitutional questions. The second is judicial accountability: if the judiciary is to play any constructive role in a democratic society, judges must be held accountable for the judgements they render.

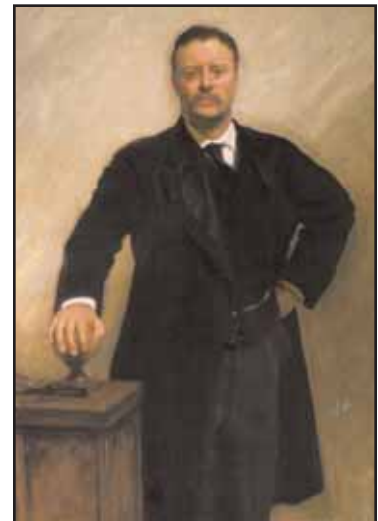
For more information, visit our web site at <http://cfi.hanover.edu>.

## **CROWE ACADEMY**

**PRESENTS**

### ***The Strenuous Life of Theodore Roosevelt***

**June 22, 23 and 24, 2007**



Participants at this event will embark on an academic journey of exploration through the remarkable times of Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt's energy, vision, courage, and leadership make him a fascinating subject of study.

TR advocated the "the strenuous life, the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife," and he praised "the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph" ("The Strenuous Life," 1899). The Rough Rider's own life reflected this bold outlook. A New York political leader, he held a variety of government positions, eventually becoming Vice President and then twenty-sixth President of the United States. President Roosevelt supported progressive reform and moved the United States onto the world stage. He was also a hunter and conservationist, working to preserve America's wilderness. After losing his bid for the presidency in 1912, Roosevelt joined a 1913-1914 South American expedition that explored the River of Doubt, an adventure that nearly cost him his life. Crowe Academy is a summer educational program of Hanover College's Center for Free Inquiry. Participants enjoy presentations, discussions, films, food, and Hanover's scenic campus during the weekend event. Tweed Roosevelt, great-grandson of the President; Michael McGerr, Professor of History at IU; and Daniel P. Murphy '81, professor of history at Hanover and Director of CFI will be among this year's guest speakers.

*For the latest information and instructions on how to register, visit our web site at <http://cfi.hanover.edu>.*

Additional free copies or permission to reproduce individual issues of *Inquiries* may be obtained by contacting **the Center for Free Inquiry.**

*Visit the CFI web site at:  
<http://cfi.hanover.edu>*

For More Information about The *Center for Free Inquiry* at Hanover College and its programs, write Post Office Box 108, Hanover, Indiana 47243-0108 or call 812-866-6848 or email: [cfi@hanover.edu](mailto:cfi@hanover.edu)

*Inquiries* is published by the Center for Free Inquiry. Russell Nichols, President of Hanover College; Daniel Murphy, Director; John Ahrens, Associate Director; Matthew Vosmeier, Associate Director; Marsha Ahrens, Administrative Director. © 2006 by Center for Free Inquiry. All rights reserved.



P.O. Box 108  
Hanover, IN  
47243-0108

Address service requested.

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Bloomington, IN  
Permit No. 171

Send all address changes and comments to: Center for Free Inquiry, P.O. Box 108, Hanover, IN 47243-0108  
[cfi.hanover.edu](http://cfi.hanover.edu)