

# Immigration: Legal Pride vs Illegal Insult

20<sup>th</sup> August 2006 was one of the proudest days of my life as this was the day that I became a naturalized American citizen. As I sat in the amphitheater of Congress Park in Denver, I thought back on my journey to get to this point.

For those of you who have not gone through the immigration process, I will tell you that it is nowhere near as daunting as some in the political arena would have you believe. I came here legally on a 2-year work permit; after which I applied for my Green Card. I paid the fees, experienced a rather humiliating medical exam, and had to prove that my qualifications from my home country were valid and transferrable to the United States. A few years later I applied for my citizenship. Again, this simply involved paying a fee, completing the appropriate forms, and having a rather funny interview with an Immigration Officer who had me prove that I could read, write, speak, and understand English. I found this funny because I am an English Language Major from college. The most insightful thing that I had to do as part of the citizenship process was take a civics class so that I could understand the government system and a history class so that I could understand the basis and founding elements of the United States. I was asked 100 questions of both topics – things like “Name the first 13 colonies of the United States”; something I would venture to say most high schoolers these days could not answer. I was proud that day not only to become a citizen but to finally have the right to VOTE!

All these steps seemed reasonable and appropriate for someone who wants to make the United States their permanent home. Some of you may understand my frustration and at times anger when I see thousands of illegal immigrants pouring across our Southern Border. I am the last person to be against immigration; but you MUST do it legally. There are thousands of potential immigrants in Iran, Afghanistan, China, and other countries who must wait to do things legally because they cannot walk here; and let's be honest, illegal immigrants are not crossing the Southern Border holding a college degree – not even a high school diploma in most cases.

Ah, but I hear some of you saying that I am a racist – no I am a realist. Illegal immigration does two things, it depresses the economy and wages for those at the lower spectrum of the wage scale and it allows criminals into our country and we have no way of knowing what their intentions are to American citizens. Ask yourselves this, would you be supportive of illegals living in your community if someone you loved was killed by them in a car accident because they could not read English and went down the one-way street the WRONG WAY??? I'm not even talking about the real criminal element like MS13 moving into your neighborhood, I'm simply talking about someone who cannot read and understand English which is the main language of discourse in the country.

Similarly, I hear some of you saying, “but these are unaccompanied minors, we need to take care of them” – Why? They have parents in their country of origin. Lackluster border control currently supported by the Biden Administration allows drug cartels to use children like property. Many young women are raped during their journey here. If we simply sent the children back to their country of origin, very soon the flow would stop because they would know that they do not get to stay. Flimsy claims for asylum don't help either. I am quite sure that every country in South and Central America has an American Embassy. Claim your asylum status there and wait for approval.

I caution the American taxpayer on the refugee immigration process also. While all these people are vetted prior to entry to this county, they are automatically entitled to Medicaid, food stamps, free housing and many other government benefits that the American taxpayer provides. But these are never explained on CNN or MSNBC. They would have you believe that immigration into this country is broken and needs overhauling. No, you just simply must follow the law.

I find myself becoming despondent to immigration. If all we are going to do is allow people to just pour in, why even have an immigration system? It makes people like me feel like fools for following the law. It takes away from the time and effort that we put in for the privilege of becoming an American and being able to vote.

My final thought is that our elected members of Congress and the Senate begin to stand up for ALL Americans and say enough. This cannot continue. There are currently 10 million Americans out of work because of the pandemic and you are allowing thousands of illegals into this country to further depress the economy and worst yet, commit crimes that could forever change your personal lives. I fully support President Trump's "Stay in Mexico" policy as this prevents what we are currently seeing at our Southern Border with a mass influx of unaccompanied minors; and we MUST complete building the wall. I believe, as President Trump does, that immigration should be merit based so that we get skilled immigrants that will help and improve society and not just be a drain on our government. I pray for America and God Bless America.

Written by Elbert County Republican Claire Waller. Proud wife to Jonathan Waller and mother to Bryce Johnson (F15 Crew Chief US Air Force)

**Footnote:** Total costs for immigration fees spent over a period of 13 years \$3,500.