

**HOW ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION IMPACTS CONSTITU-
ENCIES: PERSPECTIVES FROM MEMBERS OF
CONGRESS (PART II)**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION,
BORDER SECURITY, AND CLAIMS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

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HOW ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION IMPACTS CONSTITUENCIES: PERSPECTIVES FROM MEMBERS OF CONGRESS (PART II)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2005

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION,
BORDER SECURITY, AND CLAIMS,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:43 p.m., in Room 2141, Rayburn House Office Building, the Honorable John N. Hostettler (Chairman of the Subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. The Subcommittee will come to order.

This hearing is the next in a series of hearings concerning the impact of illegal immigration on local constituencies. And, as I mentioned last week, who better to explain what is going on around the country than Members of Congress from impacted areas.

Last week, we had Members from Texas, New Mexico, and Illinois explain the situation in their district. Much of their written testimony explained the high rates of crime in their district, and the detrimental impact on American employment.

Mr. Bonilla, representing 700 miles of the Texas Border Region, testified that his district has been under siege from an invasion by gangs, drug traffickers, and illegal alien traffic.

In his testimony, Mr. Bonilla said that small law enforcement offices in the border communities are overwhelmed by the onslaught of traffic.

Mr. Pearce of New Mexico testified that there have been special interest aliens caught in his district, individuals from Afghanistan, two from Indonesia, nine from Iran, and one from Syria. And this is only over the past 2 years.

He testified that local enforcement in his district use a full quarter of their budget while helping the Border Patrol.

Today, we have three Members whose districts do not border Mexico. We have our colleagues from Georgia and Tennessee, and one Member from Texas.

As we discussed last week, Texas, like other border States has been overrun by illegal aliens.

Unemployment and crime are high in the border areas, as indicated by the charts to my left and to my right.

And there is an inverse relationship in these areas between Border Patrol apprehensions and property and violent crimes.

But once illegal alien traffic runs through Texas, these illegal aliens settle throughout the country in areas that might have illegal employment ready for them.

This is perhaps because political conditions allow easy passage, illegal employment, and settlement for this illegal population.

Our Member witnesses can explain whether Georgia and Tennessee see such conditions. As you can see from the chart on my right, illegal alien populations have sprouted up in many non-traditional settlement areas of the country. Georgia and Tennessee are such areas.

As I mentioned last week, cities and towns around the country are negatively impacted by the heavy toll on infrastructure, the costs of emergency and non-emergency health care, primary and secondary education, and, of course, the loss of jobs for Americans.

In addition, society is gravely burdened with additional crime, high populations, national security dangers, and damage to the environment.

I think the Members of Congress can agree on one thing on this issue: The illegal alien situation must be brought under control.

With that, let me allow the witness Members to discuss the situation in their own districts, since they know local conditions, and, from that, perhaps we can fashion some solutions down the road.

I turn now to Members of the Subcommittee for opening statements, if any Members have opening statements.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas for 5 minutes, Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't have an opening statement. I just wanted to welcome my colleague from Texas, Judge Carter, who happens to be both a friend and a colleague, as well as a Member of Congress who represents an adjacent district. And Judge Carter knows as well as anybody what the intricacies of immigration are and the laws that apply to immigration, having practiced law and also served as a judge.

So I just wanted to offer special thanks for his attendance and his expertise today.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. I thank the gentleman. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Texas, the Ranking Member, Ms. Jackson Lee, for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and let me thank the witnesses and welcome as well the distinguished Members who are here and certainly to acknowledge Mr. Lewis, who will be introduced by the Chairman, who brings his own length and breadth of the American landscape as it relates to the needs of the American people.

And we appreciate very much my friend and colleague from Texas, Mr. Carter, being here, and Mr. Kingston and we know that our fellow friend, Congressman Blackburn, we'll certainly appreciate her commitment.

This is the second in a series of four hearings on how illegal immigration impacts constituencies. And I might say, Mr. Chairman, as we have worked together, that this certainly seems to be a number of hearings on one topic, a single subject.

We already know that illegal immigration requires urgent attention.

We know that, for instance, the Governors of Arizona, New Mexico, and New Mexico have declared a state of national emergency on account of the absence of border security along the border, between Mexico and the United States.

My preference would have been to devote that time to comprehensive or this time that we're spending to comprehensive immigration reform. We do welcome the Members of Congress in sharing with us how immigration has impacted their areas.

We, of course, are focusing on illegal immigration, but let me remind my friends that we are a Nation of immigrants, as we are a Nation of laws.

Let me also remind my friends that if we look at the landscape, the economic landscape, of both this country and its surrounding neighbors, in many instances, those who travel treacherous roads, subjecting themselves to violence, are coming for economic opportunity.

I'm reminded of that journey, for the reason that in studying the history of Native Americans, I understand the distinctive plight that many of them face.

In studying the history of African Americans, I do understand that our journey started first in the bottom of the belly of a slave boat, and we now have come to recognize that as we struggle for the continued respect here in this country that we must all work together to improve our collective lives.

We cannot address illegal immigration effectively by placing our emphasis on why it is harmful to our society. We must look for solutions.

We have to concentrate on finding a solution. The solution cannot be limited to implementing additional enforcement measures only. Some persons have taken a position that the undocumented immigrants in our country should be deported in totality.

That is impossible. All 8 to 14 million undocumented immigrants are entitled to removal proceedings before an immigration judge, and they can appeal adverse decisions to the Board of Immigration Appeals. In fact, we heard testimony just a few days ago that if we attempted to deport all of those who are here, it will cost some \$42 billion to begin with, and we would not be finished with those who would be in status to be deported.

And so, we know that the appealing of adverse decisions to the Board of Immigration Appeals, which does well when it adjudicates 3,000 appeals in a month, would almost be impossible.

These constraints limit removals to 36,000 a year unless people leave voluntarily, and if you add the math, it would take centuries to deport 8 to 14 million.

Others would like to eliminate employment opportunities, which they view as the magnet that keeps the immigrants in the United States. The act of 1986 made it unlawful for employers who knowingly hire or employ aliens who are not authorized to work in the United States.

That approach has not yet worked, and IRCA has been in effect now for almost 20 years.

In fact, last year, the Administration only issued three notices of intention to fine for hiring unauthorized foreign employees. Mr.

Chairman, you might find some collegiality in that unfortunate distinction that we've not been able to enforce employer sanctions.

I think the reason is, of course, that many of our industries depend upon that kind of labor. But we must answer to the American people, find a way to protect American jobs, insist that Americans have jobs, collaborate together when we can, and make sure that our employers follow the law. But there are industries that are totally dependent.

And so we must track making sure that in those industries, Americans have opportunities as they desire, but that those individuals who are here can have earned access to legalization.

Frankly, a guest worker program is simply that, inviting guests who will never return. Earned access allows individuals to have a review as to whether or not they will perform community service. If there's no criminal background and that they are able to get in a line separate from those who are in the legal line and be documented so that we know who's in this country.

My "Save America Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2092" would address all of the major problems in our immigration system.

For instance, it would address the problem of having 8 to 14 million people living in the shadows of our society by providing access to legalization for three different groups of people who made their homes in the country and have lived here for many years.

The first legalization program will be undocumented immigrants. The second would be legalization for undocumented children, and the third would be to change the registry program.

I hope that as we proceed with this hearing, we'll do several things: one, gain the information that this Committee would like, but I hope we find a way to cure the rising problem of fraudulent documents. I hope we'll find a way to have a common ground and bipartisan approach to comprehensive immigration reform, and I hope we'll come away recognizing that we are, in fact, a Nation of immigrants and laws.

This Nation was built upon a successful integration of immigration or immigrants into our society. Some of us came in a more untoward manner, but it is important that we work together to find a solution, for the American people are counting on us. And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. I thank the gentlelady.

The Chair will now introduce distinguished Members of our witness panel.

First of all, Mr. Jack Kingston represents Georgia's First District on the South Atlantic Coast, and he currently sits on the House Appropriations Committee.

He was first elected in 1992 and prior to that served in the State Legislature for 8 years. He was a strong supporter of the Real ID Act and other legislation to strengthen enforcement of immigration laws.

Mr. Kingston received his Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Georgia.

Mrs. Marsha Blackburn, who will be joining us shortly, represents the 7th District of Tennessee, which includes suburbs of both Memphis and Nashville.

A small business owner for 25 years, Mrs. Blackburn served in the Governor's Cabinet, followed by the Tennessee Senate for 4 years, where she spearheaded the effort to strengthen the State's driver's license and credentialing regulations to ban the issuance of State ID's to illegal aliens.

Mrs. Blackburn was previously a Member of this Subcommittee and has been a vocal supporter of the Real ID Act.

Mrs. Blackburn is a graduate of Mississippi State University.

Congressman John Carter was first elected in 2002 to represent the 31st District of Texas. He sits on the House Appropriations Committee, and is a Member of the Subcommittees on Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security, and Foreign Operations. Formerly, he was a Member of this Judiciary Committee, as well.

Before coming to Capitol Hill, he was for many years a District Judge in Texas and also served as a municipal judge. Congressman Carter graduated from the University of Texas Law School and holds a degree in History from Texas Tech University.

Congressman John Lewis has represented the 5th District of Georgia since being elected to Congress in 1986. Prior to his election, he was elected to the Atlanta City Council and appointed by President Jimmy Carter to direct the Federal Volunteer Agency, ACTION.

He is recognized as a long-time and dedicated civil rights advocate, who participated actively in the civil rights movement and the Freedom Rides.

In 1963, he was named one of the big six leaders of the civil rights movement.

Congressman Lewis holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religion and Philosophy from Fisk University, and is a graduate of the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee.

Lady and gentlemen, I appreciate your willingness to testify today.

As you are all familiar with the light system, we will receive testimony. Without objection, your full written statement will be made a part of the record, and we appreciate your being here.

Congressman Kingston, you are recognized for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE JACK KINGSTON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Mr. KINGSTON. And, Ms. Jackson Lee and members of the panel, it's great to be with you.

In Georgia, the year 2000, there were approximately 228,000 illegal aliens. In 1996, the number was 32,000—if you think about it in 4 years to have almost an increase of 200,000 illegal aliens. And, of course, as usual, since you're dealing with undocumented folks, you can't keep track of any of these numbers, so it could be much worse.

We seem to have two different types—those, about 100,000—who come in each year as seasonal workers. They tend to be more in the agriculture areas in the South, picking Vidalia onions or cotton or whatever. And they're more migratory. Once they're in the State, they don't really stay. The second type would be people who

stay longer. They're more in the northern part of Georgia, following the textile mills and the poultry factories, and now, in the hotel-motel resort industries as well. They tend to stay.

The impact of these groups—huge budget increases to local municipalities, from schools to hospitals struggling with the costs. Farm workers in Georgia don't have health care usually as the trend, and, according to the Department of Community Health Services in Georgia, in 2004 alone, taxpayers paid \$58 million for emergency health care for illegal aliens—\$58 million. And, you know, most of that again is for the farm care.

Another problem in the schools, just to give you a practical vignette, it's not unusual to have a child who doesn't speak English with a teacher who doesn't speak their native tongue. For example, the teacher doesn't speak Spanish. The child does. But the child doesn't speak English, and, yet, they have to be in the classroom.

And it hurts that child, plus it hurts the other 29 students because they don't have an opportunity to move forward because the teacher has to give that child extra attention, to try to work through it; yet, legally, of course, the doors are open to these illegals.

In 2002, it was estimated that Georgia had to spend \$231 million educating illegal aliens. And I am trying to jump around a little bit for the time of the Committee, but the H-2A program, farmers somewhat interested in that, particularly the Vidalia onion farmers, but they have to pay what's called the adverse effect wage rate.

And the way that works is it's not prevailing wage. When you go in and you say, okay, all the peach workers get paid \$10 an hour. On an average, that's what we're going to pay.

The adverse effect wage rate says anybody in agriculture is all lumped together. So you get a veterinarian who's making \$100,000 a year, and then a tractor mechanic who might be making \$8 an hour, and you put the mix in there. And then you have to pay what might become \$20 an hour to a worker to pick onions, and that's more than the job is worth.

And so our farmers until the H-2A program, that's one of the major problems with it, and we've got to change that part, but unfortunately it seems like all their competitors are hiring illegal aliens through contract workers; and, therefore, that's what they're going to do.

And they have a problem that if they want to do a nationality check, then they have to check everybody, because if they just check one or two workers, that's discrimination. So they have to check all 100.

I think that should be looked at, but another thing is people can go to a gun show on a Saturday afternoon and get an instant background check. Why can't an employer use the same technology to find out if Joe Blow is, in fact, an American citizen or not? I believe that technology should be available to them.

Let's see. Here's another statistic that comes from—Mr. Deal from Georgia has introduced a bill that says just because you're born in America, why do you have to be an American citizen. And I think, you know, years ago, ideologically, we all feel like, hey, if you're born in America, you become an American.

But times have changed. And most countries have changed that law who had it or they never did have it. But the cost of that may be as high as \$100 billion a year to provide for children who come in whose mothers are illegal aliens, but they have the baby born here.

And, Mr. Speaker, there are some other things—Mr. Chairman, but I'll look forward to your questions, and again thank you for taking a look at this.

I think it is something, though, that we can work through on a balanced basis, on a bipartisan basis, and address with common sense.

And thank you and I remember that the distinguished gentleman from Texas worked on the H-2A program when I was first here, 12 years ago trying to straighten it out. So we know the task in front of us is very big, and that was during Mr. Inglis' first tour of duty up here.

So thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kingston follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JACK KINGSTON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to speak before this committee. It is estimated that in the year 2000 there were 228,000 illegal aliens in the State of Georgia. That was a seven-fold increase from the INS estimate of 32,000 illegal aliens as of October 1996. The number of illegal aliens has increased 613 percent since 1996 and 777 percent since 1992, giving Georgia the seventh largest illegal alien population in the country.

Georgia has two distinct experiences with illegal immigration. In the south, illegal aliens tend to be seasonal, migrant workers. This is especially true in the agricultural sector. Northern Georgia, however, has more permanent illegal aliens, especially in the textile and poultry industries. It is believed many of the seasonal workers who start in the south migrate north where they become more permanently settled.

The nature of these two trends, obviously, has different impacts on society. The burden of a burgeoning illegal populace has been very significant to local and state governments. Everything from schools to hospitals are struggling to cope with the huge costs being placed on them.

Most farm workers in Georgia do not have health insurance, although U.S. born children of illegal immigrants are eligible for Medicaid. According to the state Department of Community Health in 2004 alone Georgia taxpayers spent \$58.4 million to provide emergency health care to undocumented immigrants. The farm workers seeking emergency care live in rural communities, communities whose health care systems are already under financial strain.

Georgia's education system is also experiencing problems related to mass immigration of illegal aliens. Classrooms are crowded with students who don't speak English being taught by teachers who don't speak Spanish. Everyone suffers in the classroom, the teacher, the students born to illegal aliens, and the children of local taxpayers who are held back. In 2002, it is estimated that Georgia spent \$231 million educating illegal aliens. The Georgia Department of Education, relying on a 1982 U.S. Supreme Court ruling, is not allowed to ask a person's residency or visa status when a child is being enrolled. So calculating the exact cost of educating the children of illegal aliens is difficult.

The district I represent consist of 29 counties in Southeast Georgia. Most of these counties are in rural areas with local economies that are heavily dependent on agriculture production. Georgia sees more than 100,000 seasonal farm workers each year, most of these seasonal workers are in South Georgia picking produce. The first district also includes the entire Georgia coast where tourism and service industries are also critical to my constituents. Both of these industries are reliant on immigrant labor. Unfortunately, many of these immigrants whose labor is so important to my district are here illegally.

Each time I meet with farmers in my district agriculture labor reform is one of their top priorities. The obvious starting point in addressing ag labor issues is to modify the current H2A program so that farmers can afford to use it. Unfortunately,

H2A requires that the arcane Adverse Effect Wage Rate be used. This rate, unlike the prevailing wage rate, is not based upon a market survey of the wages paid in a specific occupation in the area of intended employment. It is a regulatory wage rate required by the Department of Labor that relies on statewide averages of dissimilar agriculture jobs. Use of the AEWWR has resulted in inflated wage rates that farmers cannot afford. It is a frequent complaint that many farmers in my district would like to follow the law and participate in H2A but they cannot stay competitive with the current regulations. So the choice they are left with is, participate in H2A and lose the farm or hire illegal labor and continue to operate and support their families. This is a difficult position to be in and unfortunately it is all too common. The wage rate and the bureaucratic red tape associated with our current H2A program encourage illegal immigration in my district.

As some of you may remember at the start of the \$90 million Vidalia onion harvest in my district in 1998, the INS launched operation "Southern Denial" and arrested 27 illegal alien workers in Glennville, GA. The arrests led many of the 4,000–5,000 estimated migrant workers needed for the onion harvest to abandon the harvest out of fear of being deported. As a result onions were left rotting in the field and farmers in my district suffered greatly. A compromise was finally worked out and the farmers agreed to participate in the H2A program the next year. However, as I mentioned earlier this program is so outdated and burdensome that those who want to follow the law cannot afford to follow the law.

Although the numbers cannot be confirmed it is estimated that over 300,000 illegal alien women arrive pregnant each year and their children immediately qualify for citizenship. This means that American taxpayers are footing the bill for food, housing, medical expenses, and education for them up to age 18 in addition to paying for their mother, who is still considered an illegal alien. The average annual cost per child k-12 is \$7,161.00 and exceeds \$109 billion annually for anchor babies. Over 300,000 illegal alien mothers and their children are receiving hard earned taxpayer dollars each year simply for having a child across their border.

I strongly believe any immigration reform proposal to be considered this fall must contain language which addresses birthright citizenship, such as that proposed in H.R. 698, the "Citizenship Reform Act." The cost of caring for these children is extremely high. For labor and delivery alone, excluding c-section deliveries and any pre- or post-natal care, the cost is between \$1,500 and \$1,800 per child in my home state of Georgia. Under current law the government is often left no choice but to cover these costs. Despite the legal status of the baby's parents, the baby is entitled to all benefits that U.S. citizenship entails, including federal welfare benefits. One quickly comes to realize incredibly high costs this places on our social infrastructure. This is an issue which is quickly coming to affect most Congressional districts. A failure to address this issue in an immigration reform proposal would be a mistake.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to share the problems that Georgia is experiencing with illegal immigration with your committee. I look forward to working with you towards immigration reform in the coming months as this issue is definitely a priority for my constituents in the first district of Georgia.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Thank you, Congressman Kingston.
Congresswoman Blackburn, welcome back.

**TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE MARSHA BLACKBURN, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE**

Ms. BLACKBURN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have bronchitis, so I will be a little soft in the voice today, but I thank you, Ms. Jackson Lee, and the Committee, and thank you for holding the hearing and for inviting me to testify on the impact of illegal immigration in my home State of Tennessee.

In 1990, only 11,000 illegal immigrants resided in Tennessee. Today, there are at least 46,000 in the State. Many of these immigrants now hold Tennessee driver's licenses. In 2001, Tennessee decided to issue driver's licenses without requiring an applicant to produce a Social Security number or prove their legal residency in our country.

The result of this policy was a huge increase in demand. While in the State Senate, I worked to change this ill-conceived and dangerous policy with proposed legislation requiring individuals applying for a Tennessee driver's license to actually prove if they were, in fact, who they claimed to be, and, if they were legal residents.

Today, Tennessee mandates that immigrants only receive a proper driver's license if they present a Social Security number or proper immigration papers. If they do not, they receive a driving certificate. Yet, this has not prevented illegal immigrants from obtaining these driving certificates.

In July 2005, two illegal immigrants were arrested as they attempted to get driver's licenses in Knoxville. They paid a New Jersey couple \$950 to travel to Tennessee and obtain the necessary documents and paperwork needed to get the driving certificate.

The couple had been doing this for several months, and had helped at least 60 illegal immigrants procure these Tennessee driver's licenses. The two immigrants were released 3 weeks ago, and have 30 days to find transportation and voluntarily depart from this country.

Another problem facing both Tennessee and other States is the infiltration of hundreds of illegal immigrants using fraudulent documents to work at nuclear and chemical plants and military bases for contractors.

In June 2005, the Department of Energy's Inspector General found 16 illegal immigrants working at the Oak Ridge, Tennessee Y12 Nuclear Weapons Plant with fraudulent documentation. They had access to official use only documents, and investigators stated that this access represented a potentially serious control and security problem. This is just one example of a growing trend of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, Department allowing contractors to self-certify the citizenship of their employees.

Worksite enforcement is a low priority for ICE, as they have continually devoted less and less resources to the area, and often lowering the amount of fines in negotiations with employers.

GAO has stated that this policy undermines effective enforcement and allows company owners to view fines simply as the cost of doing business. GAO also stated that U.S. employers will continue to hire illegal immigrants because of these lax enforcement efforts and as the proliferation of fake documents increases.

I believe it's necessary to make Federal contractors who often oversee work at these critical infrastructure sites verify the status of their employees. Contractors must not be allowed to negotiate the fines down and ignore the law.

I've introduced two bills to address these problems. H.R. 2049, the "Federal Contractor Security Act," would ensure that Federal contractors are not using taxpayer dollars to pay the wages and salaries of illegal immigrants. They would be required free of charge to use the employee verification program to screen out ineligible workers by verifying name, addresses, Social Security numbers of newly hired employees against the records of the Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration.

Another bill, H.R. 3262, the "Employee Verification Accountability Act," would not allow ICE to negotiate the fines down, but

instead would level a standard fine of \$10,000 if the employer knowingly hires an ineligible worker.

Mr. Chairman, the driver's license problem is in the process of beginning to be addressed through the enactment of the Real ID Act. The Federal Government must begin to prioritize enforcing current immigration laws. If we do not solve this problem, I believe it's only a matter of time before our national security is further compromised.

That concludes my statement. I thank you for welcoming me back, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Blackburn follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MARSHA BLACKBURN, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for holding these hearings and for inviting me to testify on the impact of illegal immigration to my home state of Tennessee.

In 1990, only 11,000 illegal immigrants resided in Tennessee, today there are at least 46,000 in the state. Many of these immigrants now hold Tennessee driver's licenses. In 2001, Tennessee decided to issue driver's licenses without requiring an applicant to produce a Social Security number or prove their legal residency in our country. The result of this policy was a huge increase in demand.

While in the State Senate, I worked to change this ill-conceived and dangerous policy. I proposed legislation requiring individuals applying for a Tennessee driver's license to actually prove that they were in fact who they claimed to be and that they were legal residents. Today, Tennessee mandates that immigrants only receive a proper driver's licenses if they present a Social Security number or proper immigration papers. If they do not, they receive a driving certificate. Yet, this has not prevented illegal immigrants from obtaining the licenses.

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Another problem facing both Tennessee and other states is the infiltration of hundreds of illegal immigrants using fraudulent documents to work at nuclear and chemical plants, and military bases for contractors. In June 2005, the Department of Energy's Inspector General found sixteen illegal immigrants working at the Oak Ridge, Tennessee Y-12 nuclear weapons plant with fraudulent identification. They had access to "official use only" documents, and investigators stated that this access represented a potentially serious access control and security problem.

This is just one example of a growing trend of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) department allowing contractors to self-certify the citizenship of their employees. Worksite enforcement is a low priority for ICE as they have continually devoted less and less resources to this area and often lowering the amount of fines in negotiations with employers. GAO has stated that this policy undermines effective enforcement and allows company owners view fines simply as the cost of doing business. GAO also stated that U.S. employers will continue to hire illegal immigrants because of these lax enforcement efforts and as the proliferation of fake documents increases.

I believe it is necessary to make federal contractors, who often oversee work at these critical infrastructure sites, verify the legal status of their employees to ensure security is not compromised. Also, contractors must not be allowed to negotiate the fines down and, continually ignore the law.

I have introduced two bills to address these problems. One of my bills, H.R.2049, the Federal Contractors Security Act, would ensure that federal contractors are not using taxpayer dollars to pay the wages and salaries of illegal immigrants. They would be required, free of charge, to use the Employee Eligibility Verification Program to screen out ineligible workers by verifying names, addresses, and Social Security numbers of newly hired employees against the records of the Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration.

Another bill of mine, H.R.3262, the Employee Verification Accountability Act, would not allow ICS to negotiate the fines down, but instead would level a standard

fine of \$10,000 if the employer knowingly hires an ineligible worker. Together my two bills would greatly reduce the ability of contractors and the ICS to turn a “blind eye” towards the employment of illegal immigrants.

Mr. Chairman, the driver’s license problem is in the process of being solved through the enactment of the REAL ID Act. The federal government must begin to put more effort and resources into enforcing current immigration laws. If we do not solve this problem, I believe it is only a matter of time before our national security is further compromised, which could lead to another terrorist attack on our own soil.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement, and I am available to answer questions from the committee.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Thank you, Congresswoman Blackburn.
Congressman Carter.

**TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE JOHN CARTER, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Mr. CARTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ranking Member Jackson Lee, for allowing me to come and testify before a Committee that I love, because I served on this Committee.

I want to start—I’m not going to go over my written testimony other than just read you something that I think tells you where Texas was in the year 2000, which has substantially changed since that time.

In the year 2000, one million illegal immigrants lived in Texas, about 5 percent of the State’s population. Texans spend \$4 billion annually educating illegal immigrant children and their born in the U.S.A. siblings.

About 12 percent of Texas school children in K through 12 are children of illegal aliens.

Texas health care expenditures for illegal aliens are more than \$520 million a year. The uncompensated cost of incarcerating illegal aliens is more than \$150 million a year. This cost relates to Texas households of about \$725 per Texas household. This is 2000.

Since 2000, Mr. Chairman, there has been an open highway across the Texas border, pouring in at every entry point and every spot in between—illegal aliens not only from Mexico, but literally from all over the world.

And I just want to tell you some stories that I personally can recount and stories that I can tell you that my neighbors have recounted to me.

First let me tell you that the situation on the Texas border today has gotten to be where it is now a community of lawlessness from El Paso to Brownsville.

Why is that? Because people have been breaking the law up and down that border, making border crossings for years and now lawlessness prevails across the Mexican border like you have—you cannot imagine in your worst nightmare.

I just recently joined Congressman Cuellar in Laredo, and visited with all of our folks that are working down in the Laredo District. This was within the last month.

I brought with me a newspaper—and you probably can’t see it from here—with a photograph of the wife of an American Laredo, Texas police officer—he works in the narcotics division—who was kidnapped and taken to Mexico, an American citizen.

And because her husband would not cooperate with the cartels in Nuevo Laredo, she was burned alive, and her photograph sent back to her husband to explain why he should have cooperated.

It's a horrible photograph, and I think everybody should realize that just shows you what kind of lawlessness prevails.

The Mexican Government has gone into Nuevo Laredo to try to do something about this, and has literally had street gun battles. The chief of police, the newly elected chief of police, was killed within 8 hours of taking the oath of office in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico.

That element of lawlessness is spilling across our borders day and night in the State of Texas.

We viewed a film of drug dealers operating in platoon strength in what looked like uniforms, night vision goggles, armored vests, carrying AK-47s and satchels of drugs and weapons, marching across the Texas border.

And the Border Patrol was filming this, but there were only two agents, and they weren't about to take on those 48 members of this group that were marching their illegal weapons and drugs into the State of Texas. And they don't stay in Texas. They're headed to every place in this Union.

The I-35 corridor is the number one drug corridor in America, and drugs and illegals are pouring up and down Interstate 35. I can tell you that for a long time—I've been dealing with the situation of illegals and being in and around illegal aliens in my entire life time. I happen to feel like these are some of the most hard working and, in many cases, nicest people I've ever met. This is not about people. This is about law breakers.

And once you start excusing lawlessness, you excuse it all the way, up and down the border, and that's what we're experiencing now.

If we don't do something about the Texas borders, the costs that I read to you are going to—already have probably doubled in the last 4 years. And they're going to double again and again and again. It's an intolerable situation. It's a dangerous situation, and we have to do something about these borders.

Talk to the ranchers. They used to watch these folks walk through and cause no trouble.

Now, they break in. They steal their vehicles. They shoot up their houses. These are ranchers that have lived on that border for four generations, and had these illegals walk through for four generations of their family, never had any trouble until the last 5 years.

And in the last 5 years, they are scared to go visit their ranch houses—of ranches that adjoin the Mexican border.

Mr. Chairman, we've got a crisis situation in Texas. And if we—and pretending it doesn't exist is not going to solve the problem. It is frightening. It will really take your breath away, and I would hope sometime you go down there, and talk to the folks that's in the trenches, and let them tell you the real world of the Texas-Mexico border.

Once again, I have no problem with these folks in Mexico, but because many of them are hardworking good folks. But this lawlessness situation has got to stop.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Carter follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN R. CARTER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and subcommittee members. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before this committee. Illegal immigration is undoubtedly the most important issue Texas currently faces. As millions of illegal aliens stream across the Rio Grande into Texas and the United States, our criminal justice, healthcare, welfare, and education systems (to name a few) are negatively impacted. The American taxpayer is picking up the bill for unauthorized immigrants visiting emergency rooms, schooling their children, and being incarcerated.

It is estimated that in 2000, there were more than one million illegal immigrants living in Texas. That was about five percent of the state population. Texans spend more than \$4 billion annually on education for illegal immigrant children and their U.S.-born siblings. About 12 percent of Texas school children in K-12 are children of illegal aliens. Texas' healthcare expenditures for illegal aliens are more than \$520 million per year. And the uncompensated cost of incarcerating illegal aliens is more than \$150 million each year. These costs relate to about \$725 per legal household.

Other costs to Texas and American taxpayers are those associated with English proficiency programs, damages and injuries caused during border crossings, low-income housing subsidies, and unpaid taxes. Many legal workers are displaced by unauthorized immigrants willing to work for lower wages. The United State's education system is regularly criticized for being inferior to those of other nations. Just think what we could do with the billions of dollars we are spending on illegal immigrants and their children—raise teachers salaries, more education-related programs, more school vouchers, to name a few.

All this does not even begin to discuss the intangible costs associated with drug running, arms smuggling, and violence spilling over from Mexico border towns. The Border Patrol reports that Texas has the highest seizure rate of cocaine and heroine of any other state. Now I know our Texas law enforcement officers are the best and that is one reason we have the highest seizure rate, but the other reason is that we have more drugs flowing into this country through the Texas border than anywhere else. The drug business is flourishing in Mexico because of the illegal trade with America. The Mexican side of the border is fast becoming a lawless war zone where cartels and gangs rule with martial law. This tragic development is too close to innocent American citizens and the violence is beginning to spread across the border.

I applaud the efforts of Congress to reform our immigration laws. I hope to see many strict policies included in this process, including tougher enforcement of our laws, stronger penalties to act as deterrents, and a comprehensive plan to plug the leak in our borders, including some sort of wall or fence.

It is conservatively projected that ICE needs a total of 40,000 beds to handle the mandatory detention needs. Typically the agency has an inventory 18–20,000 beds including its own facilities and those obtained through contracting with the private sector or state/local facilities. The severe shortage of detention capacity has resulted in a “catch and release” situation whereby 120,000 non-Mexican illegals apprehended by the Border Patrol were released into the general population last year alone. I am aware of detention capacity that exists in my district and around the country and as Congress moves forward with reform legislation, we should ensure that ICE has the funding necessary to utilize existing capacity and to obtain additional capacity as needed to meet the detention needs.

I am probably not telling this subcommittee anything it does not already know, so please let me elaborate with some specific stories from my district in central Texas.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Thank you, Congressman Carter.
Congressman Lewis?

TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE JOHN LEWIS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Mr. LEWIS. Chairman Hostettler, Ranking Member Jackson Lee, Members of the Subcommittee, I am honored to be here, and I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on such an important issue.

I commend you for examining this issue, and hope that, as a consequence of these hearings, we, as a Nation and as people, will move closer to a workable solution that serves everyone better,

much better—a solution that preserves the very thing that defines us as American, our diversity, yet recognizes that we don't have to choose between being a Nation of immigrants or a Nation of laws.

If we are deliberate in our approach, I think we can all reach the conclusion that we can be both.

The United States is a Nation of immigrants. Our Nation was founded by immigrants to this land. Each of us in this room, save those of Native American heritage, can call ourselves immigrants or descendants of immigrants to this country.

And every generation of Americans has been strengthened by the work ethics and values of those that joined the American society from abroad.

Our diverse immigrant roots have shaped this Nation and made us what we are today, a culturally rich, diverse land with opportunity for all, and, as such, we are the envy of the world community.

Unfortunately, our current immigration system is fraught with problems, problems serious enough to threaten the very essence of who we are. There are about 10 million undocumented immigrants living and working in the United States, filling gaps in the labor market by enduring low wages and poor working conditions.

Unscrupulous employers continue to turn a blind eye to their undocumented status in order to take advantage of their willingness to work below the prevailing wage and without benefits.

These workers often live in the shadow of our society, using false identification documents, and because they fear being discovered rarely report crimes committed against them, making them easy targets.

Demand for low-skill labor continues to grow in the United States, while the number of Americans willing to work in these jobs continues to decline.

This problem is made worse by the fact that our immigration laws are out of tune with our Nation's changing economy.

Currently, there is no legal channel for low-skilled, yet essential, immigrant workers to enter the United States to meet our labor demand. The consequence of this is a continued flow of illegal workers, bringing with it a host of problems, including smuggling, document fraud, needless deaths, artificial low wages, not to mention untold violations of civil rights and civil liberties.

As long as unprincipled employers are willing to hire them, these undocumented workers will continue to try to immigrate by whatever means possible, with the hope of finding a better life and experiencing the American dream.

Meanwhile, millions of close family members of legal immigrants wait to be reunited as the applications remain in visas backlog for years, even for decades. That must change.

Our immigration system is in dire need of an overhaul. The system we have got in place is clearly broken. It serves no one well, not the immigrants, not businesses, who rely on their labor, not our national security, and not the American people. And the problem is growing daily.

No longer, no longer, Mr. Chairman, it's just an issue of border States. This has become a Nationwide concern.

Even in Georgia and the rest of the mid-South, far from the nearest land border, the undocumented immigrant population is growing rapidly, including a State like North Carolina and other parts of the Southeast.

Congress must act. That said, however, I caution not to apply this sledge hammer approach. We must be careful not to throw the baby out with the bath water.

It is essential that something be done soon, but it is even more important that whatever we do must be done right.

We need comprehensive reform that secures our borders, reunites family, and benefits the American economy. In recent testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, my friend and colleague, Senator Kennedy, put it this way: The past debate has long been polarized between those who want more enforcement and those who want more visas. But to repair what is broken, he said, we need to combine increased enforcement and increased legality. Better border control and better treatment of immigrants are not inconsistent. They are two sides of the same coin. I agree with what Senator Kennedy had to say.

And I must close by saying, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, it doesn't matter whether we are African American, Asian American, European American, or Native American. It doesn't matter whether we are White, Black, or Brown. We are one family. We are one house. We are one people.

It doesn't matter whether we are new immigrants or whether we can trace our immigrant heritage back for generations. We should all be able to share in the fruits of this great land. Maybe, just maybe, our foremothers and our forefathers came to this great country on different boats, but we are all in the same boat now.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Thank you, Congressman Lewis.

At this time, we'll turn to questions from Members of the Subcommittee.

First of all, Congressman Carter, Judge Carter, you made a very profound point and that was when you said, and I'm going to paraphrase it somewhat, but once you excuse one form of lawlessness, then it shouldn't be surprising—and this is where I'll take a little liberality—it shouldn't be surprising that other lawlessness follows. Is that—would you agree with that?

Mr. CARTER. Oh, absolutely. And you know in our present theories of law enforcement, we've learned that. That's why we have the new theory of community patrolling, which encourages the cleaning up of the inner cities, because we've learned that if you—if people—if a community looks and acts lawless, then lawlessness comes into that community and expands in that community. We've learned that in our cities already, and we've had successes by going in and having people just clean up and join in an effort to stop lawlessness; lawlessness reduces.

On the border, when you have an element that—a whole industry of people that are breaking the laws of the United States every single day and nothing happens to the people who break the laws of the United States, then the next phase is if they can't stop that, they're not going to be able to stop—we used to have small amounts of drugs coming across the border. Now, we have massive

amounts of drugs coming across the border. We used to have basically no arms trade. Now, we've got a huge arms trade. In fact, I was talking to a lady from Houston who has a ranch down on the border. They have game fences, the tall game fences so the deer don't get out. She said nobody ever cut those fences. None of those—none of the illegals that went through ever cut those fences. Now, they're cutting them, so there's an easy way to find out why. You just go out—everybody that speaks Spanish—and talk to some of the workers that work on the ranches, why is this happening? Well, they can't get the arms boxes over the fences, so they cut the fences.

That ought to be frightening every Member, every person in America, but if that's the reason they're telling those ranchers that those fences are getting cut is because they're bringing in too large of shipments to push them over a fence, that's a frightening thought.

That's what I'm talking about, the element of lawlessness. And it's just going to get worse and worse and worse.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Would you say that the initial form of lawlessness—

Mr. CARTER. It's the illegal immigration.

Mr. HOSTETTLER [continuing]. Is coming across the border in the first place?

Mr. CARTER. That's right. It's—once you have a culture of its okay to break the law, it just grows.

And in that, we got lots of experience in law enforcement over, you know, centuries to know that that's true. You can look at our history of our country, on the East Coast even, and the big cities on the East Coast, and you can see that at times when lawlessness broke down, when it became a lawless community, it gets worse. That's what we've got. It's getting worse, and it's now they're coming up. You know we had 60,000 OTMs, other than Mexicans, in the Laredo area. This was according to our people that have been caught and released—60,000 in the last year. These are people that are from other than Mexico that have come; caught and released.

Now, we don't know where those people are. We've got 500,000 people who are gone. We have turned them loose, and we don't know where they are.

They caught them, turned them loose, and we got no idea where they are. They haven't reported to court. They're somewhere—I can tell you that talking to the folks around my neighborhood, they're all going to Chicago. That's seems to be the Promised Land.

In my part of Texas, everybody seems to be headed for Chicago. I don't know what's in Chicago, but they all seem to be. If you talk to them, oh, when I get through with this job, I'm going to Chicago.

So it's going all the way from our border to Canada. People are headed that way.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Yeah. Thank you, Judge.

Congressman Kingston, according to the Atlanta Journal Constitution, Georgia State University granted four illegal aliens of local high schools full tuition scholarships last year. Do you think that the people of Georgia wanted to pay those tuitions, especially those who are putting their children through Georgia colleges?

Mr. KINGSTON. No, Mr. Chairman. And as I understand it, the State Legislature has that as one of their top priorities that there is some quirk in the law that you cannot ask an applicant to college if they are an American citizen or a legal American citizen or not. There is something that they're trying to address.

But really you get to where there's a rub in general and that is for people who have followed the law, such as my uncle, who was a legal Hungarian refugee, who migrated to America, waited in line, did not speak any English, but did all the things right, and what you're—the signal is, hey, you can break in line and the benefits are there whether you have followed the laws or not. And that's what the people really are mad about. We need a fair and balanced commonsense immigration policy.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Thank you. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Texas, Ms. Jackson Lee, for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much. Let me thank the witnesses for their testimony, and I want to, if I will, probe some of the solutions that we might be able to have.

Mr. Kingston, can you just highlight again—you—obviously, Georgia has, similar to many of our Southern States and Western States, a rural economy. And you were complaining or at least said that there needs to be a fixed H-2A. Would you restate that for us again?

Mr. KINGSTON. Well, one of the problems is that the H-2A requires that workers be paid the adverse effect wage rate. And because that's different than the prevailing wage rate, which we often talk about in regards to, say, Davis-Bacon, where you get one type of industry, pool it together with the same types, and come up with an average wage, the adverse effect wage puts dissimilar vocations together and it increases the wage.

And the example I had given is that you could have an agriculture veterinarian thrown in with an agriculture mechanic, and it skews what the wage rate is. But that's what you have to pay a migrant worker who's come onto your farm to pick peaches or onions or whatever. And so, because of that, it's very expensive for a farmer to legally hire H-2A workers.

On top of that, he has to provide transportation and housing. And we've had farmers who say I want to do the whole thing and do the whole thing right, and 2 or 3 years down the road, they just get disillusioned because none of their competitors are doing it.

And that gets back to one of the problems is that—and I think you mentioned it in your opening statement—that there were only three enforcement actions in the country this year. That's one of the biggest problems is that there is not the enforcement of the existing laws. And so, there again, for a farmer who wants to do it right, following H-2A to the letter, he's penalized because no one else is.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Well, you know, that's what I think would be the answer to your concern. Of course, we, over the years I think in a bipartisan manner, instructed or at least directed the various agricultural entities to provide transportation and housing because we were trying to create a better quality of life for the legal migrant worker that were utilized by industries in the Southeast and

then on the West Coast, in the wineries and other agricultural entities.

So I think what we would look for is some kind of fix that evens it out.

Mr. KINGSTON. Absolutely.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. We shouldn't discourage the farmer who wants to do it right to applaud or to affirm those who want to do it wrong, which is one of the reasons that I think we must look closely at the Guest Worker program and how it works, because, in addition, the question is that we have any numbers of migrant workers who are here, who obviously or may not likely take a trip back out of town or out of the country to make good on the Guest Worker program and so there may be—when we talk about a bipartisan solution, looking at the H-2A to try and fix it; make sure it's enforced, so there's not an imbalance; but also look at earned access to legalization for those who are here, with strict criteria.

I want to ask some questions to each of you—and I'm going to say them first so that I can have an opportunity to hear your answers.

Congresswoman Blackburn, I am interested in the Federal funds being used to pay illegal immigrants. Interestingly enough, the Congressional Black Caucus and Congressional Hispanic Caucus have been interested in that issue, and we're coming together around a policy statement, because it impacts a lot of our constituents as well, and I think it's a very valuable initiative, and I'd like to raise with you the fact that fraudulent documents has been a great concern.

I would like to offer the thought of a fraudulent document task force that draws together all of the police entities on the Federal level so that we can know what Peter is doing and what Paul is doing and find out the trail of fraudulent documents.

Do you think that that would be a constructive approach as we begin to look at how we can start fixing problems?

Ms. BLACKBURN. I think that looking at the documentation, of course, is one of those, and that is what led to the Federal Contractors Security Act, which is H.R. 2049, the bill that I mentioned.

For those companies that would choose to contract with the Federal Government, they would be required to use the employee verification program, which is the 1-800 number dial-in program. We know that there has been success with that in the test pilot. And they would be required, the employer would be required, to enter whatever documentation the number individual has. So that would give us one tool that we could use.

Another—and this would be covered separately in different legislation, but I appreciate the point that you're making—the actual appearance of the document—and we hear that from the employers also, and I'm sure that's what you're referencing that they look at these documents in front of them and they do not know if they are valid or if they're counterfeit. And there seems to be a problem in their ability to discern that. Local law enforcement is requesting tools. Our driver's stations—driver's testing stations are requesting those tools, and are requesting additional guidance.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. And would you think, then, that a Federal task force on fraudulent documents, securing information from

around the Nation, would be helpful to be able to track down these sources of fraudulent documents?

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I'm not so certain that we need to say an additional bureaucratic entity is what is needed. I certainly think that the resources exist within ICES, with ICE, within different entities that are there, and it goes back in my opinion to what I said in my statement about prioritizing the use of those resources.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent for an additional minute.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Without objection.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me just say that I think let me just—Congressman Carter and to Congressman Lewis, and we appreciate your time, and I'm going to ask the question, if you could go ahead and answer it.

Judge, you've hit the nail on the head, and I think, however, we have to decipher, we had an earlier hearing on border violence. I've been to the border as well. We had Congressman Cuellar here visiting us. But I think there is very important if you might comment to distinguish the acts of outright, outcast criminals that are bringing in guns and drugs that have accelerated because of the extreme violence at Nuevo Laredo and other places from economic undocumented that we need to address in the immigration system. We had here the Department of Justice at the earlier hearing, but find a way to recognize that smugglers are bringing in both—people, drugs, and guns. But we must I think take a direct concerted effort to the violence, if you may comment on that.

And, Congressman Lewis, and I might I say that one of the issues I think when we talk about Border Patrol agents has to be resources. We can't talk about bureaucracy and there's too much bureaucracy, when we need to fight this war. So it's a question of whether we fund our Border Patrol agents, whether we give them the tools of anti-smuggling units, or do we give them fraudulent coordination systems is very important.

But, Congressman Lewis, with your history in the civil rights movement—and I will yield to Judge Carter and then you—can we find a way, is it not complete to say that how we treat our immigrants is how we're perceived around the world and how we find a balance, as you have so eloquently said, speaks also to the histories that America has gone through in the civil rights movement, when there were others who had a second class status.

Congressman Carter, just on this issue of the violence, the extreme violence at the border.

Mr. CARTER. Thank you, Ms. Jackson Lee, and I agree with you wholeheartedly. You know one of the real tragedies is the human smuggling that's coming across that border, and the actual people who are losing their lives and suffering very, very terribly. And these are, as I've said in my statement, I have great sympathy to these hard working people who want to work. I have visited—for years, I practiced my Spanish every chance I get to talk to these people, because I learn from them.

And my position on this, from a person who's been involved in the law for a long time is I don't want any American citizen or future American citizen starting their life as a law breaker in the United States. We can come up with a better plan to allow people

to start their lives in this country legally. And I'm not opposed to working out a solution for the immigrant status of these people, not at all, but I first feel like we have to give the confidence to our citizens that our borders are safe, and then work out plan for the rest of them.

And that's why I'm one of these secure the border first people, because it's dangerous.

But I have a tremendous amount of sympathy for those who come across as do I think most all Texans who have lived there a long time, we've been interacting with these people our entire life time, and they are our neighbors. And don't have a—you know, I don't personally have problem with any of these. In fact, I've got some pretty good friends in that community. You know, they don't vote for me, at least I hope they don't.

But the facts are it's a situation where human tragedy joins with dangerous activity to make lawlessness an element on the border.

So let's shut down the borders first, and then let's work out a program to have everybody be first-class citizens when they become Americans, not those who started out as criminals.

Mr. LEWIS. Congresswoman, I think it's important for us as a Congress and as a Nation to come up with humane and compassionate ways to treat immigrants. It is a reflection on who we are as a people, who we are as citizens, not just of America, but as citizens of the world. The world is much smaller in this age of communication and information. You can sneeze in Houston, and we can feel it in Atlanta or feel it New Delhi or some place. And we go to be very mindful and sensitive.

So we need to come up with a blueprint, a road map, and be mindful, because, you know, just look. America today is not going to be the same America in 20 years from now or 30 or 40 or 50 years. America is going to be browner. We have to face it. It's not just going to be Whites and Blacks, but it's going to be more brown. And we're going to look more like the world community, and we have to take the long hard look, not just do a quick fix for next week or next month or next year, but for generations yet unborn.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, let me at the outset make a quick observation, and that is the obvious: that three of our four panelists today are not from Border States. This would not have been thought of 10 years ago or even 5 years ago, but I think it shows how far the problem of illegal immigration has spread, or if you don't consider it a problem, then how far the phenomenon of immigration has spread.

And I notice that that's true of other panels as well, that a majority no longer are not from Border States.

Let me address my first comment maybe to Congressman Kingston and Congressman Carter, because both of you all emphasized the cost of illegal immigration. You gave examples of education, of incarceration, of health care and so forth. The way I see it with illegal immigration continuing to increase, those problems are only going to get worse. And just this last week, I ran across a figure

that I'll pass on to you, which isn't going to be reassuring, but will reinforce the point you just made and that is that 20 percent of all births in California are now to illegal immigrants, and 10 percent of all births in America are now to illegal immigrants. And that's just going to compound the problem.

Congresswoman Blackburn, you and Congressman Kingston mentioned the problem of verification of employees who are not in the country legally. And you're right. Congressman Kingston mentioned the technology is available and indeed it is. What is not available or what is not evident frankly is a willingness to implement that technology and to make those checks. If we did so, we would have good grounds for trying to implement a better system, whether it be the H-2A system that Congressman Kingston and I worked on those many years ago or other systems. But unfortunately, that continues to be a problem just because of the unwillingness to enforce those current laws and to enact new laws.

And, Congressman Carter, you mentioned crime specifically, and you and I have talked about this before, and let me add another statistic to the mix as well, and that is that over 20 percent of all Federal prisoners today are, in fact, illegal immigrants. About half of them have been convicted of—all of them have been convicted of felonies, but half of them have been convicted of drug dealing. So if you want to reduce crime in America, if you want to reduce the cost of incarceration, if you want to make our communities safer, then you simply need to know who's coming across the border, why, and for what reason they might be coming across.

Unfortunately, not everybody is coming across for the right reason. If they're coming across illegally, to me, they shouldn't be coming across at all.

And so far I haven't got too many questions, but, Congressman Lewis, let me ask one of you. Are you at all troubled—and you mentioned employees as well—are you at all troubled by all of the studies, both liberal and conservative, that have found that illegal immigrants compete directly with American citizens and legal immigrants in this country, particularly for blue collar jobs. And every study, liberal or conservative, middle of the road, independent, whatever, has found that wages have been depressed. As a result, jobs have been lost. It's really simply a matter of supply and demand when you have many, many people willing to work for minimum wage or below, that competition is going to result in an adverse impact on, as I say, legal immigrants, as well as a citizens. Do those—does that wage depression and job loss concern you?

Mr. LEWIS. I think, Congressman Smith, we've got to continue to find ways to grow the economy and create more jobs. When I visit some parts of Georgia or other parts of the country really and see the large number of recent immigrants to the—our country or to the City of Atlanta working, they're Black. They're Hispanic. They're White. I think that's what America is all about. Or people going up into north Georgia that Congressman Kingston would know about working in the poultry industry.

I don't think we should be afraid of people coming in doing some of the necessary work that needs to be done.

Mr. SMITH. Okay. Maybe we can discuss this further just as Members perhaps, but there isn't a job in America that isn't per-

formed by citizens willing to work hard. Many jobs in America are performed by illegal immigrants, but they are probably not as high of a percentage as lot of people think, and, unfortunately, in those particular professions, be it construction workers or maintenance, the unemployment of Americans and legal immigrants is in the double digits because of the competition with the illegal workers.

So that's something we can continue to discuss.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Congressman?

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

Mr. LEWIS. Sometimes when you look at certain industries, it's not just the hard manual labor, but you should come to some cities, say, in Texas or in California. Look at the taxicab industry here in Washington. Look at certain other industries. Those are the people that the employers are hiring. Something is going on there, and it's not just a matter of immigrants taking jobs from Americans. Something else is happening there. And that's why I think we got to look beyond.

Mr. SMITH. Okay. But to many employers, it's just a matter of cheap foreign labor, and they'll pick that over others.

One other point to make and you're welcome to respond or if you want to and that is I love the idealistic theory of—and agree with the idea of one nation, one people—and I acknowledge as much as anybody else that our country is great today because of the contributions of immigrants. We would not be the great Nation we are without their contributions.

However, I hope that you would make a distinction, as I do, between legal immigrants who have played by the rules, waited their turn, obeyed our laws, sometimes been waiting patiently for years to come into our country the right way versus those who flaunt our laws, cut to the head of the line, and break other laws. Take advantage of our taxpayers, basically steal from them with all these costs. To me, there is a distinction between legal and illegal immigrants that I would hope that you would consider.

Mr. LEWIS. I consider that very much so.

Mr. SMITH. Okay.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Smith, I wanted to comment, though, also, because remember when we talk about the felons and the more violent criminals who have maybe gotten into this country for a job as illegal aliens, and then they broke another law, and they were arrested for drugs. But remember, the other person who broke the law was the employer who hired them.

And we do need to enforce the law. As Ms. Jackson Lee said, and I totally agree with that, but, you know, even when you can't enforce the law, that doesn't excuse employers for not following the law. And I think that there is maybe in Congress a bully pulpit opportunity that we, through the Chambers of Commerce and the NFIB, have to say to the hotel-motel owners, the lawn service folks and the taxicab companies that Mr. Lewis mentioned that, you know, you're breaking the law. And so, you know, it's not a matter of blaming it just on that guy who came over the Rio Grande. You broke the law also.

Mr. SMITH. That is a good point, which I appreciate being made. And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. And you will find a hearty amen chorus to support both of the gentlemen from Georgia's assertions.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Berman, for questions.

Mr. BERMAN. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I apologize for being late. I was at another meeting. I did want to come to this.

But I want to just pick up at least—and perhaps your reactions following on something you said when I wasn't here, but my Judiciary staffer was watching on television and just briefly reported.

This issue of the employers. We know the fundamental flaw of the 1980—there were several flaws—but one of the fundamental flaws was that the employer sanctions were a joke, because, for understandable reasons, the business community did not want each employer to become a little INS enforcer, so you said there would be some documents and if the employee presented those documents, the employer could rely on those—the authenticity of those documents.

We then created an industry in the manufacture and distribution of false documents.

But the present situation, in 2005, I'm going to take an issue you talked about—agriculture. This has been true for a very long time in the West, but now it's true in Georgia and in a whole bunch of other places as well—a huge percentage, a huge percentage—I think in California, it probably is close to 90 percent. It may be less in some of the other places, but it's very substantial—of the people involved in the planting and harvesting of perishable fruits and vegetables and nursery workers—areas where it's not highly mechanized—where you—it's not corn and wheat and grains.

A huge number of those people are undocumented workers, illegal immigrants, whatever you want to call them. Every grower knows it. Some of them go through efforts to hire farm labor contractors or to contract with farm labor contractors so they can act like they don't know it. But they all know what they are doing.

The grower—and I remember talking to a couple from Georgia, in fact, who was trying to do it through the Guest Worker program, the H-2A program, to compete with the growers, the vast majority of whom were quite willing to aside at the documents or to use a farm labor contractor to the employer were at a tremendous competitive disadvantage for a number of reasons.

Now, you and I are going to have differences on the adverse effect wage rate, because to move to a prevailing wage rate in an industry where the wages are so depressed by the presence of large numbers and a potentially enormous oversupply of undocumented workers depresses the wages, so the prevailing wages become the minimum wage. And you address—or adverse effect wage rate, complicated though it is, has the effect.

There is a proposal, which I've been very involved in, called AG Jobs, to try and come to a restructuring of all this.

And one of the things it does is make a number of changes in the H-2A program. It gets rid of all the procedural roadblocks to utilizing guest workers. It puts a freeze on, a temporary freeze on, the adverse effect wage rates so that wages won't be cut, but that

particular problem. And it attempts to deal with the reality of the 70, 80, 90 percent of the agricultural workers.

If we don't want a perishable fruit and vegetable industry in this country, we can ignore this situation and just try to start banishing everybody. But if we do think it's important to keep that industry in this country, we have to take a grip with reality. We have to deal with who's picking in the crops now and what status they're going to be in, and we have to avoid the mistakes of the 1986 bill by having a verification system for the future so that the employer can very simply determine through a phone call, through whatever the mechanism is, that the person who is seeking that job is truly here with authorization to work.

And so I mean I think there are ways out of this. Now, you can denounce anything you want as an amnesty. A proposal which says they came into this country, so they have to come home, go back, before they come in again is an amnesty, because it's for—it's not holding against them the fact that they came here illegally. You can call anything an amnesty and defeat everything by doing it.

But I just think a comprehensive solution that deals with border enforcement, that provides a true verification program for the hiring of all workers so we don't get into issues of do they look foreign or are they domestic, but all workers, that that person has the authority to work, and then has a realistic solution to the situation we're faced, and it's not just agriculture. John Lewis mentioned others. It's in the construction industry now. It's all over. This is a—we are in a terrible situation now. The guy who is trying to do it the right way is at a tremendous disadvantage, and the issue of the employer that you mentioned is absolutely right, because the guy who wanted to do it right, he can't end up doing it right. He gets—he goes the same way as all the rest of them, because he can't survive in the industry. He has to quit, because he can't survive doing it this way. So that's my pitch in, and if you had any reactions, I'd be interested.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Without objection, the gentleman will have an additional minute for responses from the panel.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Berman, I agree with much of what you have said, and forgive me, my voice is not full strength today.

And that is what led to both the pieces of legislation that I talked about in my testimony. H.R. 2049, which is the Federal Contractor Security Act, and it requires a company that is going to do business with the Federal Government taking taxpayer money and paying employees to verify that the people working on those projects are who they claim to be.

And this is important not only because of the immigration issue and how embarrassing it is to our Government when our Government conducts a raid on a Government site and finds illegal immigrants there, but it's also important because of those who would misrepresent who they are in order to get into sensitive areas and get to sensitive material.

The other thing—and this goes back to one of Mr. Lewis' parts—all of us have constituents who would like to have the opportunity to work on those projects where they are paid a good wage. And many times, they lose that opportunity, because the job will go to someone who is in the country illegally and is working for a lower

rate. And then that individual that is working for that lower rate, who is here illegally, is not going to have other protections provided through the law.

Mr. BERMAN. Could I just respond to that one point, Mr. Chairman or is that—

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Without objection.

Mr. BERMAN. Oh, thank you very much.

I used to believe that, and I thought, in fact, at times the gentleman from Texas and I were aligned, because I believe a lot of this was an effort to get past the workers—I mean there was a marketplace. You paid decent wages. You got the workers, and it was much easier to bring in and recruit illegal workers because you could pay them less, because they wouldn't—it was good from their historical perspective.

But I've come to the conclusion that in agriculture specifically, and I think in some other we call it unskilled or entry-level, although I mean you talk about—I mean I think I'd rather spend 30 days in the County Jail than pick fruits and vegetables all day long—that there probably is—there are probably shortages of workers; that there aren't a large number of U.S. workers who are going to come in and pick those crops if we could just get rid of all the illegals, and the real consequence is we're going to lose that particular industry in this country.

We will export the highly mechanized products, the corn and the wheat and all that stuff, and we will import all our fruits and vegetables. And that's what the consequence is.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Yes, somebody said they're going to start sending semi-skilled—

Mr. BERMAN. Those are higher paid.

Mrs. BLACKBURN [continuing]. Labor in these Federal contractor projects we do have that situation.

The other bill I have, 3262, is the Employee Verification Accountability Act, and that speaks to some of the things you referenced in the '86 immigration bill.

It would remove the ability of employers to negotiate down those fines, because that is what we find that they are currently doing. They are continuing to hire, knowingly and willingly, hire individuals that have entered the country illegally, and then they're going and then negotiating down that fine and considering it a cost of doing business.

And that practice is not fair to anyone, much less it is something that's against the law.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Judge Carter, you were—

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Chairman, if you could just give me. I'd like to respond.

Mr. Berman, we have the same industry in Texas, and we pick fruits and vegetables in the Rio Grande Valley. That's why I know exactly what you're talking about, and I think as we put our heads together, hopefully across the aisle, to try come up with the solution to this problem, let me point out to you the fact that we've got a Catch-22 that can happen here, and I think we can look at what we did in the—I will call it Reagan Amnesty Program. I doubt very seriously in Texas, Florida, or California that anybody that got am-

nesty in 1986 or whenever it was under that program is picking fruits and vegetables in our State anymore.

And that's what we have to look at. As we legalize people here, their status automatically qualifies them to move to the next level of labor and go up the salary chain, and rightfully so.

Mr. BERMAN. It's the American way.

Mr. CARTER. That's the American—rightfully so.

Mr. BERMAN. And that's why you need to have some kind of temporary foreign guest worker program—

Mr. CARTER. I think I happen to agree—

Mr. BERMAN. at the same time.

Mr. CARTER [continuing]. With you on that, but it has to be something where we know, when they're going to get here and when they're going to go home.

But I do—and I don't want to lose that industry. We definitely don't want to lose it in Florida or Texas or California, because these industries are important to Americans. And we actually produce better produce than the rest of the world does.

So we've got to be able to—I agree with you wholeheartedly, and I would support a plan to come—where people come in legally for a contracted period of time, stay that period of time, and go home.

That's a good plan. That's a good thing for us to start looking at. But anything that legalizes the people that are here, you don't expect them to pick those fruits and vegetables, because they don't have to anymore.

And then the next wave of illegals will come across that border unless we do something about the border.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. The gentleman from Georgia is right.

Mr. KINGSTON. Yeah. I want to say I think, as Mr. Berman outlined it, I think you have a very commonsense solution, and you're not talking about amnesty, and I certainly agree with your definition; send them home, let them get redocumented, and let them come back, if that's what I interpreted you saying. But I wanted to say this. Really, my point was that the last guy standing following the law is out of business.

And we've heard over and over again, you know, farm folks, brick masons, sheet rock—there's painters, roofers. It's all the same thing. You know, I didn't want to do that, but all my competitors did, and I had to stay in business, and so to have a reform and not put it in employer sanctions is ridiculous, because we'll just—you can reform all you want, but you have to include the employers in the formula.

Mr. LEWIS. If I could just respond for a moment. It's just not the private sector, and I think the gentlelady from Tennessee made the point. If you travel to almost any major city in America and spend some time and talk to people, who are the people that are working repairing the streets? Who is repairing the roads in certain major cities in America? And so we seem just quit it and says the private sector. It's the person who's building the building or building—but it's school system. It's local government. It's county—probably State and probably Federal also, if we really did our homework.

I think we have to find a way, the people that are here, find a way to make them legal. I don't understand this fear about not giving people driving licenses. Don't we want our streets to be safe

and want people to know how to drive? I don't understand this thing about not providing health care. Don't we want our people to be healthy, everybody?

So it's important for people, whether they're here legally or illegally, to have access to health care, to be able to have a legal driver's license. What is the fear?

And we talk about building walls and fences. I think it was Robert Frost who said, when you build a wall, when you build a fence, what are you trying to fence in and what are you trying to fence out. What is the fear? We need to come up a blueprint, a road map, and do it right.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. I thank the gentleman. The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady for 1 minute for a question that she had wanted to pose.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. This is such a ripe session that I thank you Members very much. It really is helpful to our Committee.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. We keep using these fresh fruits and vegetables analogies.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. First, I'd like to ask the Chairman to ask unanimous consent to place in the record from the *Houston Chronicle*, "8 People Accused of Smuggling Girls for Prostitution."

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Without objection.

[The information referred to is available in the Appendix.]

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me ask Judge Carter and Congressman Lewis in terms of solutions, and let me pose this question again on the fraudulent documents.

We've come with a lot of testimony—and of the abuse of fraudulent documents, but also what it does to employers and others who are trying to follow the law, and so we would hope if you would, from the Judge's perspective, be able to say what it would be helpful to have the task force that comes out law enforcement—the DEA, the FBI—sharing that information they have on fraudulent documents. And let me just finish with him—Congressman Lewis, Mr.—Congressman Smith asked this question. Legislation that would include the protecting of American jobs, because you just said, you know, we got—the people are here. But if we had language that talks about protecting American jobs, outreaching to minority and underserved areas in terms of providing training with a fee, for example, that immigrants pay. Wouldn't that be the kind of message we want to send to Americans that we want to protect your jobs. We want to outreach, whether it be minorities or others, but we have to find a fix to these problems as well?

And I'll let Judge answer, and then if you would answer. If we put in the immigration bill a way to protect American jobs, a way to train young people, a way to outreach, would that be also an effective tool? Judge?

Mr. CARTER. You know, Ms. Jackson Lee, in Texas, it's against the law to buy liquor with a false ID.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I do know that.

Mr. CARTER. We're all very aware of that, because that is a problem in our high schools and so we made it against the law, and we made it a Class B misdemeanor, which can carry up to 6 months in jail and up to I believe a \$5,000 fine. And it curtailed that.

Now, people can use that same false document to get a job, to come—report for jury service. I spent—once we went to driver's license selection for jury, I spent the first 15 minutes finding somebody to speak Spanish to talk to the crowd to make sure that just because you had a driver's license, it didn't mean you could be on the jury. You had to be an American citizen to be on the jury, and I'd have 15 or 20 get up and leave every jury service, every week.

If we make it illegal and we put punishments on using these things and we put punishments; it's against the law for a liquor store operator to accept a false ID.

Now, why can't we be—and it's against the law for these people to hire these folks with these false documents. Make—I mean I believe in making people responsible for their own actions.

I think the employers should be responsible for their actions. I think these people that are making applications for these jobs should be responsible for their own actions, and we should enforce the law.

We have a good system in every State in this Union for enforcing the law. Let's do it.

You know I could never get INS to pick up people in the jail that were illegal immigrants, ever. I called them personally. Over 20 years of service to the—on the judiciary, and I never got them to pick up one, ever, except on Tuesdays. That's the day they came to town.

So, you know, we're not using—a lot of the tools we got in place. We got them in place. We can use them if we'll just do it, and you've raised a very good point there. We need to enforce the laws that are on the books.

False swearing is against the law in Texas, and I think every other State in this Union. And yet you swear that—on many of these documents to get them. These are issues we can address. But we don't. And that I argue that leads to this element of lawlessness. It encourages people to go ahead and break the law and nobody is going to punish you. Nobody is going to say anything to you.

I'm just an old law and order guy, you know, and I believe if we enforce a lot of our laws, it would work.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Lewis?

Mr. LEWIS. It's important, Congresswoman, for us to find the necessary resources and appropriate the necessary resources to train people, especially young people.

There's so many young people growing up in America today without any sense of direction, any sense of purpose in many of our cities and rural communities, and we need to make available the resources, the tools. You know everybody is not going to go to Harvard or to Yale or to Morehouse or Spellman Atlanta, or the University of Georgia, or wherever. They need the skills. They need the tools. And we have to be prepared and willing as a Congress and a Nation to spending the necessary resources to prepare people for the workforce.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. I thank the gentlelady.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your indulgence, and that speaks to the Save America Comprehensive Immigration Reform bill, and I look forward to our hearings, and this

is my—this is the document. Thank you. Thank you very much for your presentation.

Mr. HOSTETTLER. I thank the witnesses today for your invaluable testimony and contribution to the record on this very important issue. All Members will have 7 legislative days to make additions to the record. The business before the Subcommittee being complete, without objection, we are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:03 p.m., the Subcommittee adjourned.]


A P P E N D I X

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

HOUSTON CHRONICLE article entitled "8 People Accused of Smuggling Girls for Prostitution," submitted by the Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee

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SEARCH IN Chron.com

HOUSTON CHRONICLE ARCHIVES

Paper: Houston Chronicle
Date: Tue 11/15/2005
Section: B
Page: 4
Edition: 3 STAR

8 people accused of smuggling girls for prostitution / It was the 2nd suspected sex ring to be targeted in the past 2 months

By HARVEY RICE
 Staff

The promise of legitimate jobs was used to lure girls and young women to Houston from Central and South America, federal authorities said Monday.

Rape, beatings - and the threat of even worse - were used to force them into prostitution once they were here, investigators said.

The U.S. Attorney's Office accused eight Houston residents of smuggling girls and young women here to work as prostitutes in local bars. The group is the second alleged international sex-trafficking ring targeted in the past two months by the Human Trafficking Rescue Alliance, a task force of local and federal agencies.

The six men and two women were arrested Sunday and 100 women from Central and South America were arrested on immigration charges by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Bureau, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Calvin Botley told the eight, all Salvadorans or U.S. citizens of Salvadoran descent, that they are accused of conspiracy to recruit, transport and force girls and women into commercial sex acts.

Charged were:

Walter Alexander Corea, 39, owner and operator of the El Cuco Restaurant, which adjoins the Mi Cabana Sports Bar. Agents say he headed the sex-trafficking ring.

Maximino "Chimino" Mondragon, 57, owner of El Potrero de Chimino bar in the 12000 block of Hempstead Highway and the adjoining La Margarita Restaurant.

Victor Omar Lopez, 38, and Oscar Mondragon, 47, operators of the Mi Cabana Sports Bar in the 8100 block of West Tidwell.

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Kerin Josue Silva, 19, Corea's son.

Olga Mondragon, 45, wife of Oscar Mondragon and operator of the El Huetamo Nite Club, also known as the La Leona Club, in the 1800 block of Ojeman.

Maria Fuentes, 35, who is accused of keeping records of payments to prostitutes.

Lorenza "Comadre" Reynosa, age undetermined.

Botley scheduled an arraignment and detention hearing for Thursday after Assistant U.S. Attorney Ruben Perez opposed the suspects' release on bail.

The criminal complaint also names several suspects who remain at large.

Authorities say the eight promised girls and women from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras jobs as waitresses earning \$500 a month, then forced them to work as prostitutes to pay smuggling fees ranging from \$8,000 to \$13,000.

Some women told investigators that customers were charged \$200 to \$500 for a night with them, but that the women were not allowed to keep any money. Others said they earned \$500 to \$600 per week selling drinks to male customers, but received only \$50 per week after living expenses were deducted.

Women who refused to work as prostitutes or tried to leave were coerced with threats to their homes or families, the complaint alleges.

One woman told officers that Oscar Mondragon raped her and then said his brother also wanted sex with her.

Four Mexican nationals were indicted in September on accusations that they lured Mexican girls and young women here and forced them into prostitution. Two more Mexican nationals accused of participating in that ring were indicted last week.

...

OUT OF BUSINESS

Federal agents arrested eight people and took about 100 women into custody in an investigation of alleged sex trafficking at these Houston businesses:

1. El Potrero de Chimino bar and the adjoining La Margarita restaurant, 12000 block of Hempstead Highway - owned by Maximino Mondragon.
2. Mi Cabana bar and El Cuco Restaurant, 8100 block of W. Tidwell - owned by Walter Alexander Corea.
3. El Huetamo Nite Club, 1800 block of Ojeman - operated by Olga Mondragon.

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