

What do you think?

an opinion for The People by pete edwards

Who works for whom

Something happened in September that I need to run by you to find out what you think. You will be aware if you read the front page story this month about illegal aliens undercutting American jobs and that the illegal immigrant problem in Bradley County is fast getting out of control. You will also be aware that if it were not for the sheriff department's recent acceptance into the Criminal Alien Program (CAP) by ICE, the federal agency responsible for immigration and customs enforcement, precious little would have been done by our government to help us combat the rush of undocumented illegal aliens who have settled here. But even this only helps deport those illegal aliens arrested for other crimes not just for being here illegally, which is a crime in itself.

It could be argued that

history has shown it is not unusual when the economic stability of a community is rocked, as it has been by our troubled economy, for there to be a backlash of discontent against any group that are perceived to be adding to the problem, and that illegal aliens are not adding to our economic woes. But in this case, people here illegally are directly competing for American jobs and services and our leaders are to blame. For at least the past couple of years, the sounds of a concerned populace have been ignored by those charged with taking care of the problem. Federal, state and local officials have all been shrugging their shoulders and pointing fingers saying it's someone else's responsibility but they are all to blame. The truth is that political correctness is stifling dialogue on this important topic and even usually outspoken leaders are worried

that if they take up the clarification call of concern, they will be labeled racist by the radical left wing faction of local leadership and ostracized by the prominent business community who are taking advantage of the influx of cheap labor.

This paper is dedicated to tell you what the others won't, even if it is unpopular with the powers that be. The Cleveland City Council, the Cleveland Bradley Chamber of Commerce and our city and county mayors have been busily encouraging illegal aliens to come here. They say publicly that they do not support immigrants that are here illegally, while at the same time setting up special services they know will be primarily used by those they say they don't want, and keep quiet about enforcing the law. This is hypocrisy and fraud on the taxpayer. It is a bare faced lie

to say illegal immigrants are being discouraged when services designed for and paid for by US citizens are buckling under the weight of the illegal alien influx. This is not good for the indigenous community or those immigrants that settle here legally.

Now to the enforcement side of the equation. US immigration laws are strict and unforgiving. Basically they say that if you break any of them you are out, and can never come back even if you take a legal path. If you are caught here illegally, you are deported and can never return. The laws are designed specifically to counteract the situation we are experiencing and they work well... if they are enforced. They are being vigorously enforced on people coming from Africa and Europe and many other parts of the world as they should be, but for some reason a blind eye is being turned on those from South American countries.

Who is to blame for our predicament and what should be done?

First I am going to tell you what I think. No punches pulled, regardless of political correctness. Then I hope you will let your feelings be heard loud and clear at every level of leadership. From your correspondence, I pretty much know how you feel but if you disagree, let me know too.

So here goes.

Locally the ball has been

dropped by all our officials. Some are sympathetic but have lacked the courage to step up to the plate and demand action, while the majority are closet liberals or self serving fat cats furthering their agenda. The same is true at the state level, pleasant noises and finger pointing but no real action. I believe it is at the federal level that Bradley County has been betrayed the most. We taxpayers finance an army of agents who's job it is to take care of the problem, but somewhere along the way some of these agents have become apathetic to the problem they are employed to resolve. Somewhere along the way the expectation to obtain results and accountability for failure has been lost at all levels of the ICE agency. Locally, Police Chief Wes Snyder, said we have a resident (ICE) Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent with an office at the Cleveland City Police Department and it is not a local police responsibility. As was explained in the front page story, ICE agent Brenda Dixon was not exactly helpful when she was contacted about the number of illegal aliens identified in Bradley County. In fact, Dixon seemed miffed that her name had appeared in a previous article and said, "[she was] not allowed to be contacted for press purposes" and, there was a point of contact that handles press inquiries but did not say

who that was. It is my experience that when a public employee is uncooperative and seeks anonymity it means they have something to hide, usually they are incapable of handling the job and are trying to cover the fact. If that is the case with Agent Dixon, then Bradley County's state and federal representatives need to demand an inquiry as to why the ball was dropped here and what specific action the top brass at ICE intend to take to remedy the situation. Our representatives should exhibit courage and not be persuaded to forsake their constituents in favor of political correctness.

There is one other point about the non enforcement of immigration laws worth mentioning. If a US citizen made a citizen's arrest of someone who admitted being here illegally, would the law be enforced then, would they be fingerprinted and deported? If not, would that be a cause for the Grand Jury to investigate and the official responsible held to task? Are enforcement of immigration laws discretionary and can they be enforced differently depending on country of origin? If not, do enforcement officials have the right to question people from outside the North and South American Continent? What about equal protection and race, creed and color?

It is all so confusing, but worth thinking about,

What do you think?

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- Bradley County Courthouse Room 206
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- Cleveland City Mayor, Tom Rowland's Office
- Cleveland High School
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