California Candidates Should Face the Big Issue

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The California recall will probably dominate national news until the October 7 election, but the dog that hasn't barked yet is how the candidates are going to deal with the big problem they are pretending not to notice. That's the cost imposed by illegal aliens on the state budget, the hospitals, the schools and the prisons.

The massive numbers are changing the demographics and the economy in profound ways. Over the last decade, one million people have illegally entered California from Mexico, while two million Americans have fled California to a half dozen nearby Western states in search of lower taxes, less regulation of business, better schools, less crowded highways and safer communities.

California's problem was caused by the federal government's failure to enforce our immigration laws plus the pandering to the illegals by Gray Davis and his administration. Californians tried to protect themselves from this federal default in 1994 when nearly 60 percent of the voters passed Proposition 187 to deny most state-funded services to illegal aliens.

A single Jimmy Carter-appointed federal judge overturned the vote of the people, sitting on the case until Gray Davis became Governor, who then kept Prop 187 permanently inoperative by refusing to appeal this judicial outrage. Despite a decade-long smear campaign by the people who profit from open borders, surveys show that Prop 187 would easily pass again if it were re-submitted to the voters.

Two authors have just presented a wealth of documentation about the high price Californians are paying for accepting this flood of low-cost labor from south of the border. A groundbreaking investigation by Fred Dickey of the Los Angeles Times shows how illegal aliens are "creating a Third World chaos in the California economy," and the new book "Mexifornia," by Hoover Institution fellow and Cal State Fresno professor Victor Davis Hanson, sets forth the disastrous economic and moral results of our open-borders policies.

The Los Angeles Times reports that 950,000 illegals live in the five counties of Greater Los Angeles. Their economic activity is mostly underground, which means the employers pay low cash wages, no overtime, no benefits, and no taxes.

Businessmen who don't go along with this under-the-table racket are at a 20 percent disadvantage with their competitors. Los Angeles black talk-radio host Terry Anderson says the same auto-repair jobs that blacks used to hold at $25 an hour are now worked by illegals at $8.

John Chiang of the State Board of Equalization, California's tax oversight agency, estimates that the state loses $7 billion a year in unpaid taxes because of the underground sector. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that 30.6 percent of Hispanics receive means-tested government benefits compared to 9 percent of whites, and tax revenues simply can't keep pace with the rising demand for government services.

Of course, the illegal aliens don't have health insurance, so when the hospitals (which are forbidden to ask about citizenship) accept them as patients, the costs are loaded onto the backs of local taxpayers and patients who do pay their bills. Sen. Dianne Feinstein said the cost of medical care provided to illegal aliens in California last year was $980 million.

California schools are an academic and financial disaster. Even though California spends $2.2 billion to educate children who are illegally in this country, nearly half of Hispanic adults have not graduated from high school.

"Mexifornia" describes how a de facto alliance of the Corporate/Libertarian Right and the Multicultural Left has unwittingly reduced the standard of living for workers of all races and spawned a virulent and separatist race industry. The book shows that the illegal Mexicans don't assimilate like Italian, Jewish and Polish immigrants of earlier times, but instead congregate in impoverished communities where only Spanish is spoken.

This cheap-labor separatism creates a two-tiered economic and social structure. The illegals have no hope of rising into the middle class and become increasingly resentful of the system in which they remain forever doing menial jobs to maintain Americans in a lifestyle that, by Mexican standards, appears to be one of ostentatious luxury.

Almost a fourth of all inmates in California prisons are from Mexico. Hanson describes the young illegal aliens who vandalize, steal, and deal drugs, and their anti-U.S. attitude that "It's our land anyway, not yours."

Hanson makes the moral argument that current policies have undermined our common culture and harmed the very people the politicians claim to help. He calls for "sweeping restrictions on immigration," an end to the "separatist ideology," and a "stronger mandate for assimilation" emphasizing American culture and language.