



## **Luke Messer on Immigration Reform**

I have not talked to one single American who believes illegal immigration is good for our country. Frankly, some of the biggest opponents of illegal immigration are the folks who worked hard, played by the rules and came to America legally.

There is no doubt in my mind that our country needs an aggressive plan to deal with illegal immigration. It has been estimated that our country's population of illegal immigrants now exceeds 11 million. If you talk to folks who work in law enforcement or health care and government services, they will tell you that illegal immigrants are placing a very real burden on the law abiding taxpayers of both our small towns and large communities. This is not just a big city problem anymore.

We share a 2,000 mile border with Mexico, and any talk of meaningful immigration reform starts with doing a better job securing the border. Given today's modern technologies, this goal is achievable. Unfortunately, to date, the federal government has failed in its responsibility to secure our borders. It is unfortunate that it may take an act of congress insisting on secure borders to do what the President already has authority to implement.

Border security is the most important step toward immigration reform for at least three reasons: First, control of our borders is an essential element of any sovereign nation. Second, conditions along the border mock the rule of law. Third, America's innate sense of fairness will make it difficult to even consider further immigration reforms until we know that our borders are controlled.

Amnesty is not the answer. It will only worsen the problem because it will cause more people to come here illegally with the hope of someday having their status adjusted. Admittedly, this is a difficult challenge because of the incredible number of folks here illegally. However, I could not support a program that gave amnesty to people who are already in America illegally. Like Mike Pence and others, I would require that anyone currently in the country illegally must leave and come back legally, under the terms of the guest-worker program. To come back legally, they would need to demonstrate a job opportunity in the U.S.

America became the world's great melting pot through legal immigration. Through legal immigration, we became a country second to none with the greatest minds, hardest workers and the kindest hearts in the world. Any immigration reform should, therefore, recognize that our country is a land of immigrants, and encourage legal immigration and a temporary worker program which reflects our labor needs in both the high-tech and agricultural sectors. Additionally, our policies must underscore the importance of learning English, American civics, and respecting the values of our great democracy.