

# **Immigration in America:** **A Perspective from an American Tea Party Activist**

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November 18, 2013

***...I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic...***

[excerpt from the United States Oath of Allegiance taken by all immigrants who wish to become U.S. citizens]\*



## **Introduction: America---Still an Oasis of Liberty**

*For centuries, America has been a popular destination for explorers, refugees, entrepreneurs, and immigrants. Except for the unfortunate slaves, native Americans and indentured servants, the country offered most people something rarely seen in other parts of the world: **Liberty, Individual and Religious Freedoms and Economic Opportunities.***

*American citizenship was and is a precious and cherished commodity in the world and a goal that deserves to be respected.*

*America always welcomes new legal visitors and immigrants. America is a free country. Law abiding people can come and go as they please without government control or limitations. Unless you are a fugitive from justice, people can move freely around the country without reporting to or asking permission from any government agency. As an American citizen we are protected by the U.S. Constitution and also have certain unalienable rights given to us by God... "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness".... that is the "pursuit" of happiness. Nevertheless, some Americans remain unhappy. It is still up to them to pursue happiness, if they wish.*

*My ancestors came to the U.S. from Germany/France in the 1880s. They worked hard as bakers and shop owners and eventually became naturalized American citizens. I am blessed and reaping the benefits of my family's early immigration.*



## **A Little U.S. Immigration History**

*Controlling immigration has been an issue since the country was a neonate. The Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 allowed the deportation of "dangerous" aliens. These atrocious acts were eventually allowed to expire, but did highlight that the Federal government sought to be able to permit selected immigrants in and deport those who they deemed unfavorable. In the 1920s, the U.S. government enacted a "quota system" for allowing immigrants into the U.S. based on national origin. It allowed millions of immigrants to become U.S. citizens and even sent illegal alien Mafia figures, like Lucky Luciano, back to their home country. This quota practice was abandoned in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century via the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act that allowed immigrant families to be reunited and encouraged the immigration of skilled labor. The act allowed new waves of immigrants from Asia, Africa and Latin America to America's shores.*

*In 1980 the term "refugee" was removed as a preference category and the worldwide ceiling on U.S. immigration was reduced to 270,000. The Immigration Act of 1990 limited unskilled workers to 10,000/year and continued to promote a nuclear family model.*

*In response to the tragedies of Sept 11, 2001, the USA Patriot Act broadend the scope of aliens ineligible for admission or deportable due to their terrorist activities (e.g., endorsed a terrorist act or associated with a terrorist organization).*

*So, you can see that the process of legal U.S. immigration has been well studied, litigated and enacted. It is a very complicated system and it can take up to 15 years to become a U.S. citizen legally.*

### **Questions for an American Tea Party Leader about Immigration**

The following questions were presented to me from Robin Kathleen Everitt-Walker, a student at Western University in London, Ontario. She was interested in a perspective on American immigration from a tea party activist. She chose me. I hope she and you find my comments helpful.

*\*Disclaimer: the views and opinions expressed below are those of Barry A. Schlech and not necessarily of my tea party or any other organization. I would guess that 80% of my tea party associates would agree with what I say below, but this is a highly controversial issue with most Americans and I respect those with whom I disagree.*

### **What is the tea party's over all stance on immigration reform?**

*Most tea parties have great respect for the U.S. Constitution and the Rule of Law. We also believe strongly in American national security and sovereignty. We appreciate, respect and welcome legal immigration. Coming from these values we are against law violators, a porous national border, or preferential treatment of foreigners over Americans. We believe that we already have substantial numbers of immigration laws and a workable, albeit inefficient, path to U.S. citizenship for incoming LEGAL immigrants. The issue is not **reform**, but **enforcement** of existing laws and securing our national borders. We are seeing our government ignoring existing immigration laws and choosing not to enforce them. New laws are not the answer.*

*From my perspective, here are 14 proposals to help resolve the current immigration crisis:*

- 1) SECURE the border FIRST within 2 years to stop the influx of illegal aliens [e.g., boat sinking- take on no new passengers—fix the damn leak in the boat first; NYC has 46,000 policemen while Texas had 9,000 border agents to patrol 60% of the U.S./Mexico border...priorities??]*
- 2) ENFORCE EXISTING immigration laws [they're there but are being ignored or downright violated now]*
- 3) PROVIDE a Guest Worker Permit for those ALREADY here [crossed into America illegally OR overstayed their visa] and allow them to stay in the U.S., BUT they must a) not have a criminal record, b) pay fines or penalties for their illegal transgression, c) obtain a special photo ID, d) show competency in English, e) begin to pay U.S. Income Taxes. [it's not practical to deport 20 million illegal aliens]*
- 4) EXPEDITE existing citizenship applications for those immigrants legally in line for citizenship [these applicants should have top priority; Also, we must not assume all illegal aliens want to become citizens, but those that do should go to the back of line for citizenship.]*

- 5) *INSTITUTE severe penalties for employers hiring illegal aliens [dry up the magnet for more illegal aliens; availability of cheap labor should not be a reason to break the law]*
- 6) *DEPORT immediately any illegal alien convicted of a felony or a gang-related activity or who is in a U.S. prison [no 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> chances, AND convicted murderers should be eligible for the death penalty regardless of what Mexico or Canada believes. Also, special attention should be given to illegal aliens that have overstayed their visas since history has shown that potential terrorists have abused this system to gain access into U.S., plan their evil and try to kill Americans]*
- 7) *ALLOW “anchor babies” to be U.S. citizens, but their illegal relatives are still illegal [the babies are faultless in this and the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment grants citizenship to “all persons born or naturalized in the United States”]*
- 8) *SUPPORT Southern border states [AZ, TX, CA] in their efforts to enforce Federal immigration laws and to secure their borders [border states have immediate and peculiar interest in securing their own borders]*
- 9) *OUTLAW “Sanctuary Cities” [these cities are illegal and violate existing Federal law and probably state law]*
- 10) *INSTITUTE new quotas for people coming from radical Islamic/terror-ridden countries [focus is unfortunately on Mexican citizens coming to U.S. illegally, but other illegal aliens are more of a problem (drug lords, sex traders, terrorists)]*
- 11) *DENY any tax-payer supported welfare benefits (e.g., medical, food, social security) to illegal aliens [U.S. taxpayers should not be paying for non-citizen expenses]*
- 12) *ELIMINATE practice of dual-citizenship [you are either a U.S. citizen or you are not; there should be no other country loyalties].*
- 13) *TEACH students in ENGLISH the basic fundamentals [e.g. American History, Math, Science, English Literature and not ethnic, sex-education, diversity, global warming, anti-capitalism or Common Core curricula]*
- 14) *PROVIDE illegal aliens with state-issued driver’s licenses with specially marked photo IDs that cannot be used to vote. [they will be driving on our roads anyway, let’s be sure they and we are safe]*

*Again, no amnesty, i.e., NO easy, quick and direct way for illegal aliens to become U.S. citizens.*

### **Why do tea party members reject the Obama Administration's Immigration Reform plan?**

*We are not convinced that REFORM is necessary in light of the above reservations about law enforcement. We do not like how the Executive Branch [Justice Dept] 1) fought the “border states” [e.g., Arizona, Texas] in their attempt to enforce the U.S. border in their own state, 2) fought any voter ID efforts the states have made to ensure the integrity of elections, 3) directed the immigration agencies not to arrest or deport illegal aliens who committed relatively minor crimes, and 4) gave preferential treatment to Islamic and Mexican aliens in the courts. We are also skeptical about President Obama’s and the Democrat Party’s motivation: 1) We believe they only see illegal aliens as political pawns and as a new source of Democrat voters and 2) we believe they are NOT as compassionate about illegal aliens as they seem to say they are and see them only as a distinct demographic group of potential voters.*

**What does the tea party want included in future immigration reform? (i.e., quotas, paths to citizenship, punishment, etc.)**

*If changes [a.k.a. reform] must be made... key resolutions must put current American workers, students and families **first** above any new people applying for citizenship or here illegally. Therefore, there should be no special treatment of illegal aliens regarding welfare, social security, healthcare, college tuition. Amnesty for those who have entered this country illegally should not occur. Secure the border to stop the illegal intrusions into our country. People can reap the benefits of American citizenship by doing it the lawful right way--- not by sneaking into our country in the dark of night.*

*Any guest worker program that documents guest workers and their families should require them to pass health and criminal background checks, to be self-supporting, including the purchase of health and other required insurance, to pay taxes and to demonstrate a working knowledge of English in a reasonable amount of time in order to obtain permanent legal resident status;*

*Young people in this country illegally through no fault of their own should earn legal resident status or even citizenship when they demonstrate English fluency and knowledge of American civics, comply with all health requirements, have no criminal record, graduate from an accredited high school, and pursue a college degree, trade certification or enter into military service.*

**Does the decentralization of the tea party impact the movement's ability to effectively participate in policy reform with regards to immigration?**

*No, the strength of the tea party movement is its grass-roots nature. It started from the bottom up. Regular American citizens became fed up with the Federal bureaucracy and its fiscal irresponsibility, hence Taxed Enough Already [TEA]. Individual tea parties sprang up across our nation in 2008 and 2009 to protest the irresponsible fiscal policies of the Federal government during the late Bush and early Obama administrations. We also saw Obamacare as a great and unnecessary boondoggle and a grab for greater bureaucratic power. This grassroots ground swell precipitated the dramatic electoral wins in 2010 of tea party candidates. In 2014, we expect to be even stronger. The Republican Party would be wise to capture the conservative energies smoldering in the tea party movement. If they are, then immigration problems and other challenges, would be remedied if America would embrace conservative principles. They work every time they are tried. So, no, the tea party is still very effective locally and needs no central or national-controlling group.*

**Are there any potential Presidential Candidates (i.e., Ted Cruz, Rand Paul, etc.) that strongly represent the tea party's prospective on immigration?**

*Certainly, any conservative candidate that espouses tea party values (see below) will be supported. The Presidential election is not until Nov 2016, but we already have a number of individuals testing the political waters. People like Ted Cruz, Mike Lee, Sarah Palin, Rand Paul, Marco Rubio, have already had some early currency with tea party people. We are adamantly against the "moderate" Republicans who talk a good game, but are really supportive by their voting records of big government and more Federal spending.*

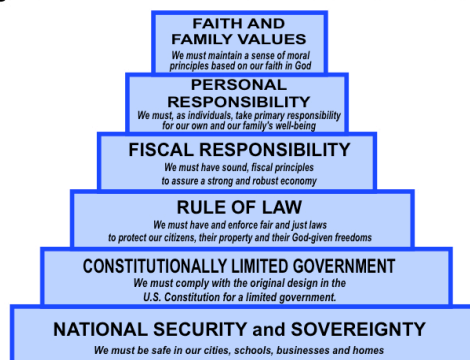
**The mainstream American media often portray the tea party as "anti-immigrant," what are members of the party doing to counteract this negative image? Why has this stereotype evolved?**

*Yes, I agree we have been maligned and painted as “anti-immigrants”. We have also been called “radicals”, “racists”, “extremists”, “NAZIs”, “bible thumpers”,etc. None of these epithets are true. These negative stereotypes are easy to create, but have nothing to do with our real values. We value our families and fiscal responsibility and national sovereignty. America, in all its grandness, is not capable of taking on an “open border” policy if our nation is to survive. I flatly deny that we are “anti-immigrant”. We honor lawful ways of becoming U.S. citizens. We are sorry that some people chose to break our laws by entering our country illegally, but they were not coerced to do so. It was their individual decision. It was an illegal act. If anything, we are “anti-illegal immigration”, but have compassion for the predicament the illegals have put themselves in. Again, immigration is controversial and success will inevitably have many paths. Americans are compassionate people and far outspend the world in charity and humanitarian efforts. America is usually one of the first to help out in worldwide disasters. Sympathy and compassion are noble traits, but we can’t run a corporation or country solely on them. Companies and countries need sound, strong leadership ready to make difficult decisions for the survival of their company or country. America has been the great “Melting Pot”. With an open-border, anything-goes policy regarding immigration, we are threatened to become the world’s “Melted Pot”. The tea party will strive to emphasize and broadcast to Hispanic American citizens our conservative values and principles and why they work so well, if tried.*

### **Tea Party Values**

- Constitutionally Limited Government
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Lower Taxes
- Economic Freedom and Free Markets
- The Rule of Law
- National Security and Sovereignty
- Energy Independence
- Personal Responsibility and Individual Liberty
- Faith and Family Values

### **Pyramid of Conservative Values**



**\*The United States Oath of Allegiance** [taken by all immigrants who wish to become U.S. citizens]

*I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God.*