



Dear Friends,

It is very fair to say that since 9/11, immigration, both legal and illegal, has become a very visceral issue with the American public. Immigration is just not what it was 100 years ago. The setting is far different than it was on Ellis Island with the Statue of Liberty looking down upon the new arrivals. Those people were coming to America for a new and better life. Now we have people coming to America to destroy life. This situation has become totally unacceptable.

The one thing that stands out when I talk with residents is that some think the problem is just about people coming across the border illegally. The ramifications of illegal entry are far-reaching, but I think it is only the tip of the iceberg. I believe the illegal and legal entry of new arrivals is beginning to hinder our safety, our economy and our quality of life. Before I go any further, I want to state my own views on immigration. I feel if you are legal, you are welcome to stay. If you are illegal and you are apprehended, you are going back to where you came from. No more search and release. If you are illegal but have lived here for some time, it would be in your best interest to become legal just as soon as possible. Real immigration reform is right around the corner.

There are many opinions regarding our immigration problem. I respect these opinions, but due to the circumstances, I disagree with most. 9/11 is a perfect example why: roughly 2,996 innocent people perished on that terrible day. However, how many lives were really affected, forever, following the death of those 2,996 people? The answer: literally thousands. Those who disagree with my views, I would bet, would have a far different opinion of this issue if they would have lost a loved one on that dark day.

Just recently, President Obama stated that the US would accept 10,000 Syrian refugees, and it was also announced that 5,000 would be coming to Michigan. I do not know if I want these people in Michigan because I do not know who they are. I would like to know if they have all been vetted. Let's take a look at how this decision would affect Macomb County. According to a recent Michigan League for Public Policy study, child poverty in Macomb County has increased by 74% in the last 9 years; child poverty has increased in 80 of 83 Michigan counties; and almost one-half of the K-12 students in Macomb are so poor that they qualify for free meals at public schools. In fact, the entire Van Dyke Public School System, all 2,700 students, qualify for free breakfast and lunch. I must say, with these statistics staring us right in the face, why are we bringing adults and children into our state by the thousands, when we cannot take care of our own people? Sorry, it does not make sense!

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"I AM WORKING FOR YOU!"

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The impact of immigration on job seekers has been devastating. Foreigners hold down wages, keeping unemployment high and making it very difficult for the poor and working-class Americans to achieve a middle-class wage. In a recent study by Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation, it was revealed that immigrant families pay \$10,573 in total taxes per year. However, that same study also revealed that an immigrant family, legal or illegal, costs our local, state and Federal governments a combined \$30,161 per year for relocation into our country. Our taxpayers have been continually asked to shoulder the cost of health care, housing and education amounting to billions of dollars. In the meantime, our national debt has soared to over \$19 trillion. Next year, the interest paid on our national debt will be the third largest expense in our Federal budget.

Crime is another variable that must be discussed when we are talking about immigration issues. Currently, the United States has 11 million illegal aliens housed in our country. In 2013, the Government Accounting Office revealed a shocking statistic: due to the size of the incarcerated alien population in our prisons, there were three million arrests attached to this population. Violent beatings, rapes, murders and robberies topped the list. Americans should not have to live with this. We deserve better, and people in all levels of government should be brainstorming on how to solve this very complex problem.

Eliminating what are known as sanctuary cities would be a huge step forward in solving our immigration problems. Basically, these are cities that are given the power by our Federal government to instruct their law enforcement officers not to cooperate with immigration and customs enforcement officers regarding illegal aliens and criminals who are living inside their borders. The policy is totally ludicrous. Ann Arbor and Detroit are the two sanctuary cities in Michigan. San Francisco is also a sanctuary city. On July 1st, 2015, Kate Steinle, a 32 year old woman with her whole life ahead of her, was shot to death on a fishing pier while walking with her dad. The confessed killer was a known felon to the local authorities and had also been deported from our country on five different occasions. He chose to reside in San Francisco because of its sanctuary city policies. What a terrible waste and tragedy.

This particular issue demands immediate action. I have always thought that if you really want quick action, hit them where it hurts the most: in the pocketbook. First, impound all remittance payments derived from illegal wages. Second, triple the fees on temporary visas. Third, triple the fees on all border crossing cards. Fourth, take a very hard look at increasing the fees on all NAFTA workers' visas from Mexico. This would be a good start, but a much larger comprehensive policy needs to be enacted. Circumstances over decades change things, and we must change with them.

A final point: Nobel Prize Winning Economist, Dr. Milton Friedman warned: "You cannot have an open ended entitlement welfare state (food stamps, government housing, Medicaid, welfare programs, etc.) along with open ended immigration." That is a recipe for social and economic disaster. We would be putting an incredible financial burden on the backs of our children and grandchildren. Think about it!

As always, I invite your comments or opinions. Also, it is my pleasure and my honor to serve as your State Senator.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jack Brandenburg". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large initial "J" and "B".

Jack Brandenburg
State Senator - District 8