

Editorial: It's time for a humane immigration solution

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In this nation's never-ending debate over immigration, those who demand strict enforcement of existing laws are armed with a simple rejoinder: What, they ask, do you not understand about "illegal"? To them, the solution to illegal immigration is to identify those who are here illegally and deport them.

It's a reasonable point. A law should be enforced. But the argument can't be isolated from the realities of immigration, which is propelled by regional economic imbalances, familial connections and the basic human desire to live a better, safer and richer life. Those are powerful forces, unlikely to be thwarted by stepped-up deportation. Instead, under those pressures, our immigration system has crumbled, and strict enforcement has become impractical, even impossible.

Congress can and should, but probably won't, fix it.

That leaves pragmatism – which President Obama exhibited with his recent directives offering deportation reprieves for some 5 million immigrants here illegally.

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