

SUTHERLAND INSTITUTE POSITION STATEMENT

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

The following statement has been approved by the Sutherland Institute Board of Trustees and the Board's Policy Committee.

IMMIGRATION POLICY SHOULD
FOCUS ON FIXING BROKEN
SYSTEMS AND FAILED POLICIES,
NOT ON PUNISHING PEOPLE OF
GOOD WILL SIMPLY SEEKING
A BETTER LIFE IN THE FACE OF
ITS HARSH REALITIES

As Utah's leading conservative public policy think tank, the Sutherland Institute seeks sound and principled ideas in finding lasting solutions to make Utah a better place to live, work, and raise a family. In this spirit we offer a general policy statement and approach in dealing with our current neighbors who came to Utah in violation of federal immigration laws.

The Sutherland Institute believes that immigrants have made a profound contribution to the United States. America's leadership in education, economic development, military security, science, medicine, technology, and many other pursuits has been profoundly influenced by our ability to draw the best and brightest people from around the world. Immigrants have brought a notable work ethic, moral character, and sense of patriotism to Utah and other parts of the United States. Intelligent legal immigration policy is essential for maintaining American prosperity and curtailing illegal immigration.

Illegal immigration is a public policy issue that evokes strong emotions and tensions between our common feelings of human decency and the necessary rule of law on which depends our freedom and prosperity.

For any state, but especially Utah, the task in sorting out the impacts of illegal immigration, both positive and negative, rests on several key points of mutual understanding, not the least of which is that the regulation and flow of immigration into the United States is the responsibility of the federal government.

As a matter of public policy, the Sutherland Institute looks to the United States Congress to create and effectively enforce a coherent immigration and border security policy as a top priority.

We draw a distinction between the illegalities surrounding the broad experience of well-meaning and otherwise law-abiding people who have violated federal immigration laws and malicious criminals intent on harming our citizens. Violation of these laws is a public transgression, not a moral sin.

The Sutherland Institute believes that four sentiments should govern Utah state and local policy makers on the matter of illegal immigration:

- 1. We should welcome all people of good will to our state.** If a person of

good will comes to our state looking to make Utah a better place to live, work and raise a family, then we should welcome that person – from wherever and however they come to us.

2. We should not serve as proxy law enforcement officials for the federal government regarding our neighbors in violation of federal immigration laws.

Utah's law enforcement officials and businessmen have their hands full with regular duties without further burdening their limited resources and focused attention as a result of failed federal immigration policies.

3. We should seek economic transparency and personal accountability from all Utah residents.

State laws, policies, and regulations must hold illegal immigrants accountable for otherwise law-abiding behavior – to live as equals is to assume the mantle of full citizenship, self-reliance, and economic productivity.

4. We should encourage our neighbors in violation of federal immigration laws to become thoroughly assimilated, literate and productive members of our community.

This includes mastery of the English language, study of the texts of the United States and Utah Constitutions and other source documents associated with this nation's and state's founding, an understanding of and commitment to the essential

features of personal responsibility, free markets, and limited government, and preparing for citizenship.

Lastly, the Sutherland Institute emphasizes that illegal immigrants are real people with real families in search of America's fullest privileges. Their humanity must be respected. We believe people are not the problem; people are always the solution. Immigration policy should focus on fixing broken systems and failed policies, not on punishing people of good will simply seeking a better life in the face of its harsh realities. Illegal immigrants who have not engaged in other forms of criminal behavior should not be exploited, subjected to vitriolic animus, or oppressed in any way that would offend the reasonable sensibilities of an American citizen abroad. Instead, illegal immigrants should be regarded with compassion and an understanding that most of them have endured very challenging conditions and are simply seeking a better life in the United States.



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