

Despite Prop. 200, Arizona should be out front on immigration

Well, Proposition 200 passed and, as usual, the politicians are arguing about what it all means. My friend Terry Goddard even has opined that it doesn't affect much. Puhleeze, Terry. You should get out more.

The United States is calling for comprehensive immigration reform. Vicente Fox, the president of Mexico, likes President Bush's reform ideas, even if the plans are a bit fuzzy. The plan will emerge, we can be sure of it. Let's get out in front of this one, Arizona.

I'd like to offer a possible and positive solution that's in line with one of my earlier columns.

One of our Solutions Forum members is doing something about immigration reform on his own. He's done it because he needs workers for his rapidly growing company, and his program is morally the right thing to do. His firm will remain nameless, because it's sure to be controversial.

He set up a recruiting program in Monterrey and other towns in Mexico for workers. He pays



MY VIEW

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the dreaded Immigration and Naturalization Service and a Phoenix labor attorney \$2,000 for hiring 10 workers, who are pre-screened to be suitable. The workers receive guest-worker visas, Mexican passports and are in the "system." They pay taxes and Social Security in this country, like the rest of us. My client's company pays his share of Social Security and puts them on his health care plan after the usual probationary period.

Just like a U.S. worker.

The only unusual thing about the program is the workers are only here for 10 months, and then they must go back to Mexico for two months. Oddly, these workers have the option to apply for permanent resident alien status, but cannot pursue citizenship once they've been in the program, or they can come back at the end

of the two months after checking in with INS and my client.

I've written before about how and why we need this program, but I'll repeat it: Our Social Security system is a big Ponzi scheme, and we need younger workers in the system to support retiring baby boomers, among others.

This is a good start. Our research on business owners shows us Hispanics start businesses at the same rate as the rest of us.

I'm sure there still will be labor pools outside Home Depot stores and in the city of Phoenix's designated areas, and there still will be cash payments to illegal immigrants by unscrupulous companies.

But, it seems to me that all of us, our politicians included, should get behind this legal program. Arizona private employers need to know about it.

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