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County Programs Assist Illegal Aliens in Settling in the U.S.

By Robert Denny

Hubert Humphrey once said, "just because we're liberals doesn't mean we have to be damn fools."

That legend should be carved over every government doorway in Montgomery County. Where our Department of Family Resources is concerned, it should be carved into the doors and desks.

On second thought, the next county executive should simply shut down the department and compress the other five social service departments and commissions into one, with far fewer bureaucrats.

As one insider said, DFR "is an agency in search of a mission." It has found a lot of silly ones in recent years, among them trying to match social service deliveries with master-plan road boundaries and spending taxpayer money on telling people how to grow flowers, manage stress, make "life decisions," and (I'm not kidding) encouraging people to talk more at the dinner table.

DFR's latest folly is aiding and abetting an illegal and probably criminal activity.

As *The Journal* reported last week, DFR has spent \$299,000 to buy a house near Piney Branch Road and University Boulevard in Silver Spring (and plans to spend another \$300,000 expanding it) to provide a center for jobless Hispanic immigrants.

One DFR employee, Walter Wolfe, even said proudly that "this corner is known in El Salvador" — which explains why so many immigrants are flocking here.

DFR has given a \$60,000 contract to an outfit called CASA, which told *The Journal* that, while half or more of its "clients" are illegal aliens, "it's more important to get them a job." DFR also has hired a Hispanic to "work the corner."

I asked Charles Short, DFR's director, about all of this, and he said that DFR is simply making job "referrals" for aliens. I asked him how he could do this as it's a violation of federal law to employ illegal aliens. Isn't referring them to an employer aiding and abetting an illegal activity?

He said he didn't think so.

It would help if he read the law.

Under Section 274 of the U.S. Code, it's a criminal offense punishable by five years in prison to encourage an illegal alien to come to or reside in the United States, or to harbor him or her or to transport the alien in a vehicle. Any (county or private) vehicle

so used can be confiscated without a warrant.

Under Section 274A, it's unlawful "for a person or their entity to hire, or to recruit, or refer for a fee, for employment in the United States" or to enter into a contract "to obtain the labor of an alien...."

Isn't paying someone else \$60,000 to do it "referring for a fee?" Even if it skirts the law (others will decide that), isn't it a highly dubious thing for a public official to do?

It gets worse. Illegality is just the tip of a huge iceberg.

County Executive Neal Potter recently revealed that an estimated \$3.5 million of taxpayer money is being spent each year on health services for illegal aliens.

The money is being spent in three health department divisions: communicable diseases (21 cases of AIDS, 20 dysentery, and 2,388 possible tuberculosis cases); family health (pregnant Hispanic women, family planning, child health, immunization); and school health services (5 percent of our students are assumed to be illegals).

Meantime, canny young married couples are moving into Frederick and other counties rather than Montgomery to avoid our taxes, and many of our deeply rooted 110,000 seniors whose incomes are \$15,000 under the county household median and whose earnings from modest investments are falling are wondering where to move.

The problem isn't simply local.

As *TIME* Magazine reported recently, the arrival of illegal immigrants makes Americans "almost unanimously furious." The "undocumented" influx is estimated at more than 300,000 a year, nearly 5 million in the past 10 years.

Only 200 immigrants claimed political asylum in 1975. Suddenly, *TIME* says, "asylum is the plea of choice in the United States around the world, often as a cover for illegal economic migration." Almost anyone who declares that he or she is fleeing political oppression can enter the United States, agree to appear for a hearing, then disappear.

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The Chinese get in by claiming their government limits the number of children they can have. Haitians have been admitted, though all a politically oppressed Haitian needs to do is turn around and walk across the hill into the Dominican Republic (look at a map).

Large numbers of Salvadorans have been allowed to stay for another year under a "deferred enforced departure" program, not because of real or imagined "death squads," but because the Salvadoran government has asked us to support them a while longer. Once immigrants obtain residence, they can send for their families. Some 3.5 million are now in line to come in.

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France and Germany have declared "zero" immigration, and Britain is moving toward the same goal. Ironically, a national study found that most U.S. Hispanics agree.

A half-dozen bills have been introduced in Congress to remedy the problem. One, by Senator Harry Reid, D-Nevada, would establish an annual limit of 300,000, including relatives, and require an identification card.

Meantime, our Immigration and Naturalization Service is so underfunded, says Tom Perryman, supervisory special agent in Baltimore, that even criminal aliens sometimes have to be released because INS lacks detention space.

Further, present law is a Catch-22. When you arrest an illegal, you have to set up a deportation proceeding. Because of the backlog of cases there's a delay, and nowhere to hold the alien. You have to give him a work permit to support himself while he waits, but then he takes the permit and disappears.

Perryman says INS urgently needs detention space. Any suggestions?

Meantime, let's tell our county government to stop encouraging illegal immigration. ■