

The Social Contract

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The Social Contract

is published quarterly

© 2014 by The Social Contract Press

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A Note from the Editor

Apply the Brakes!

One of the great challenges to Public Policy is knowing when and how to change a successful policy grown obsolete. Very few policies are immortal. Time is a kaleidoscope presenting policy makers with an ever-changing pattern. Yet the clichés from one era often linger in our minds and public dialogue as if they were written in stone. Too often we confuse temporary success with universal wisdom. In my experience almost inevitably today's solutions become tomorrow's problems. Take immigration as an example....

—Richard D. Lamm, former Governor of Colorado

("Mass Immigration: Vital Public Policy Requires Vigorous Public Policy Debate," *Common Sense on Mass Immigration*, The Social Contract Press, 2011, p. 2)

Printed on the inside of the front cover of each issue is "About the Social Contract." It is our view that "society should be governed by an understood set of values.... Most public issues are basically moral and ethical ones. What is the right thing to do? How do we decide what we think is right? When rights collide, which ones take precedence?"

In this issue, contributors consider: What should America's immigration policy be? We are now a crowded country of well over 300 million people. When the Statue of Liberty was erected in 1886, the United States had a population of less than 65 million. As John Vinson argues in his essay,

Those who overly romanticize the 'huddled masses' of Emma Lazarus are truly people who live in the past. An immigration policy appropriate to a horse and buggy era is not appropriate today. Some will object, of course, that we are a 'nation of immigrants' and that welcoming immigrants is an important national tradition. Be that as it may, traditions must adapt to new conditions. We also have a national tradition of pioneering, but because of that, no one is suggesting that we open our national parks to settlers who want to relive the legacy of Daniel Boone.

As we do in every issue of *The Social Contract* we invite you to consider: How many immigrants should we admit? Who should be admitted? And how can we humanely enforce the rules? These crucial questions should form the basis of America's immigration policy. ■

Wayne Lutton, Ph.D.