

The Dream Act

*How about a Billion in Scholarship Funds
from Carlos Slim Helu and Five of His Billionaire Friends?*

BY DIANA HULL, PH.D.

Mexico's present makes no sense without Mexico's past. The people of the United States like to believe that political will and good intentions can solve most human dilemmas and they often find it hard to understand Mexicans, who know better.

—T.R. Fehrenbach, *Fire and Blood: A History of Mexico*

The standard argument of DREAM Act enthusiasts is that young people illegally present from Mexico who have done well scholastically in a U.S. high school deserve to go on to college. And yes, reasonable people often concede that it wasn't the fault of the child that they were brought to the U.S. by their illegal alien parents. Regional and national Mexican groups are pushing this legislation hard as President Obama assures them of his heart-felt support. But the DREAM Act, in whatever form or whatever its name, alleged goal or specific appeal, is an amnesty.

First, this legislation was taken up last year by a lame duck session of Congress, which is usually reserved for emergency bills. The 2010 proposal would bar deportation of illegals under thirty-five years old, who enrolled in college or joined the military for two years. Even criminal aliens convicted of marriage or voter fraud, multiple DUIs, and other "minor" crimes would be eligible, but that 2010 version of the DREAM Act was defeated. This year the President is attempting to make the DREAM Act the law by executive fiat.

The sequence of events is that first the DREAM Act was presented as an issue separate from the amnesty misnamed "Comprehensive Reform," but as Tom Tancredo and others point out, the DREAM Act is indeed an amnesty, in reality.¹ If passage is unsuccessful again

at the federal level, we always have governors like California's Jerry Brown, who, just signed the California DREAM Act, Assembly Bill 131. Clearly he is putting recalled Governor Gray Davis to shame, who, despite endless pressure from Hispanic activists over the years, never signed Assemblyman Gil Cedillo's seemingly endless attempts to push the "driver's licenses for illegal aliens" bill.

But how is Jerry Brown's action possible, after the ruling on California's Proposition 187 by a U.S. District Court in California, that immigration policy was the exclusive province of the feds? Well, Jerry Brown is taking a leaf from the book of the opposition as Representative Steve King (R-IA) is working to restore the authority of state and local government in these matters.

However, my intent is to discuss the DREAM Act "on its merits" or lack thereof to the major parties involved, the U.S. and Mexico, rather than the question of who has the authority to make the DREAM Act new law.

What is not generally known is that Mexico has one of the world's largest economies, with the thirteenth largest Gross National Product. In 2010, Mexico had 86 companies in the Forbes Global 2000 list and was the first and only Latin American country to be included in the World Government Bond Index, a list of the most important global economies that circulate government debt bonds. The question for the U.S. is why we keep treating Mexico as a "charity" case in spite of their prosperity.

With a population of over 120 million people, Mexico is also the most populous Spanish speaking nation,² with Spain itself at less than half that number. And how is it that officially only 28 million self-identified Mexicans or Americans with Mexican backgrounds are alleged to live in the U.S.? The best count for illegals alone is 20 million, and many immigrants from Mexico identify themselves as white or even Amer-Indian. While the dismal living condition of the Mexican un-

Diana Hull is the West Coast editor of *The Social Contract*.

derclass have 300-year-old roots, the country's wealth and its concentration is as shameful as ever. An accurate count of how many Mexicans are in the U.S. is impossible to obtain, but more important, is why they are coming and why we let this go on and why have we let Mexico's problems become a huge U.S. responsibility?

Why is the U.S. obligated to subsidize the education of illegal aliens, mostly from one of Latin America's richest countries? Also, there has been little or no acknowledgement that since the U.S. has financed the education of illegal alien young people so far, the reasonable conclusion is that it's now surely Mexico's turn to accept them back home where they can use their U.S. education and experience, while contributing to the quality of their home country's labor pool.

So what begs for an answer is which country has more of a dearth of bright high school graduates from working class families who are ready for college, the U.S. or Mexico, and to which country, would most good accrue, if outstanding illegal alien bilingual students went on to higher education, were trained in a scientific discipline, or prepared to enter a profession?

Since the taxes of Americans have prepared these young people up to this point, now Mexico should rightfully finance their further education, not only because it's the right thing to do but because it's misguided of them not to. But even when pushing their obligations on others is counter-productive to Mexico's own self-improvement, we can only conclude the gratification of getting away with another U.S. subsidy is just too attractive to turn down.

Also, when, if ever, will Mexican government's demands on America's taxpayers be satisfied? The answer may be never. It's the same question as how many more centuries must pass before they accept the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo! So this push for the DREAM Act is just another example of "penny wise, pound foolish" false reasoning and Mexico's misguided notions about a misfit between lower social class status and higher education.

The only reason for the U.S. to continue its tax-funded "welfare subsidies" policy in dealing with Mexico and Mexican nationals in the U.S., is that both government, private business, and misguided philanthropy continue to look for loyalty, cheap labor, and accolades in the sea of Mexican poverty.

All the U.S.'s big favors and forgiveness shouts "big me little you." That will not work because envy can never be tamped down by inappropriate generosity, like open borders, sanctuary cities, and plentiful freebies. And there is an excellent chance that over-the-top "do-goodism" tends to make resentments much worse.

Apparently, there is just too much envy of U.S. long-term success, compared to their own, so that even when a policy is counterproductive and not in their interest — and we are talking here about a textbook example of this — it illustrates the difficulty unequals have in establishing any real connection in the presence of a very huge status gap. The U.S. is a magnet for the oppressed, whereas in Mexico the racism they perversely accuse us of is still the order of the day, and opportunity and status are still based on skin color, as they have been for centuries.

The people who've come north to work and too often exploit us, are also the victims of Mexico's class system. But they are useful to their home country's government and "better-off" Mexicans by sending billions home to their impoverished relations. In this way our country's working class citizens take on the philanthropic obligations that the Mexican government and the whiter and more educated classes in Mexico shun.

So, unfortunately, the purported need for legislation like the DREAM Act just confirms our own condescension and Mexico's endless drive for more "rights" and U.S. "benefits," their hostility towards benefactors, and their rationalization of the status gap. Mexico's claim to be a democracy that cares about the welfare of their poor is a travesty.

Mexico is not an impoverished nation so absent of resources and needing so much help. But their enormous wealth is still concentrated in the corrupt ruling classes, as it has been for centuries. So instead of the so-called DREAM Act, which is very unfair to Americans, many with low or moderate income and college-age children, at a time when tuition is at an all-time high, let's consider the equities and what constitutes fairness to both U.S. citizens and American-educated illegal alien young people.

Plyler v. Doe³ obliged American taxpayers to provide K-12 education to illegal alien children, but kindergarten to four years of college just pushes that "envelope" much too far. So instead of having Dianne Feinstein and others fighting for the "DREAM Act" and also sponsoring individual bills to make exceptions to existing law and ensure college admission for illegal alien young people, I suggest our California Senator needs to have a heart-to-heart talk with Carlos Slim, as one billionaire family member to another.

First, she might explain why, since the Mexican government claims repeatedly that Mexicans in the U.S. are still part of their national family and country, they don't act like it when it comes to educating their talented young people, even when they are "brown" and

come from the “peasant” class! She might also ask just when Mexico’s super-rich will stop taking the “charity” that moderate-income Americans give to Mexicans, neglected by their own government, cast off, and pushed north in the tens of millions over the years.

In addition to the absence of jobs for them in Mexico, unemployed Mexican nationals, many with contempt for U.S. laws, are already present in the U.S. in vast and uncountable numbers, and unless they commit heinous crimes, they are routinely forgiven or their status ignored in places all over America — like the sanctuary city of San Francisco, Dianne Feinstein’s hometown. In fact, illegal aliens in the U.S. are mostly left in peace to enjoy SSI, health care, free school lunches, car baby seats, low income tax credits, Wal-Mart, Blackberries, and name-brand footwear.



Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim Helu

So why are you, Carlos Slim, hiding out on this issue of providing higher education to your college ready young people from “lower class” families? How about showing some leadership and understanding of the philanthropic obligations that accompany the massive wealth you and other Mexican billionaires enjoy — five of them named the world’s richest men by *Forbes* in 2010?⁴

“What cause could matter most and help Mexico’s future more,” Dianne Feinstein should ask you, “than bringing your bright, college-ready young people home at this time when your country has become desperate to rein in the violence that permeates the upper reaches of your government, which is steadily fall-

ing further into crime and depravity?”

“You and other Mexican billionaires need to explain to Americans why basic public infrastructure for poor communities and private philanthropy in Mexico are virtually nonexistent or so minuscule. Either poverty is so endemic that any solution seems impossible, or you, Carlos Slim and other Mexican billionaires, have no concern for your country’s future!”

There is absolutely no excuse for this because Carlos Slim Helu, with \$53.5 billion is the world’s richest man. Last year he edged out Bill Gates, who has been prodding him of late to try some philanthropy to see how it feels to spend on the poor. So together with the government of Spain, Bill Gates and Carlos Slim will each contribute \$50 million over five years, or \$10 million a year each, to create a health plan for impoverished Mexicans and Central Americans.

Of course this is a pittance in the scheme of things and in 2008 alone, U.S. charitable giving was estimated to be about \$307 billion, not counting what was given to higher education and religious organizations. But I guess you could call \$10 million a year a tiny start in the right direction, but it certainly gives room for Carlos Slim to expand his giving.

Also consider that Mexico has a university system of its own, which the Mexican super-rich could also support with a few billion dollars, or enough to cover the extra expense of college educations for poor U.S. college-ready Mexican nationals who have gotten a free U.S. K-12 education.

Excuses won’t do, because the National Autonomous University of Mexico, founded in 1910, is one of the largest universities anywhere. Hundreds of specialties are taught and twenty-eight “Faculties” award advanced degrees, including astronomy, with three advanced telescopes in Baja California. It has 314,000 students, six satellite campuses in Mexico, and is ranked 190th in the entire world and second best in Ibero-America, in a tie between the University of Barcelona and the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil. The University of Mexico’s main campus, “Ciudad Universaria,” is a World Heritage Site, designed by Mexico’s best-known architects and filled with art by Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros.⁵ This is the world of affluent Mexico, which is rarely shared with the lower classes.

Against this background of lavish higher education, in 1990 only five percent of Mexicans read books and periodicals and eighty percent of Mexican farms have less than 25 acres, forty percent less than 2.5 acres.

So when and if Dianne Feinstein has this conversation that I am recommending with Carlos Slim, she

should confront the world's richest man with the evidence of what cheapskates he and his other Mexican billionaire friends have turned out to be. But unfortunately that would take the kind of courage that has never been her strong suit, something Californians should take into account when she is running again for her Senate seat.

What our California Senator and Gov. Jerry Brown don't understand is that time has long run out for thinking that Mexico is wallowing in poverty, and, unfortunately murderous violence and an endless appetite for ill-gotten gains have reached new heights of criminality and brutality. But there hasn't been a suitable response to this from either the California Governor or our long-time Senator, when California is one of the states that has arguably suffered the most from the pathological nature of our one-sided relationship with Mexico. Why do American supporters of mass immigration feel free to express criticism of wealthy Americans, who actually contribute heavily to philanthropy, while they withhold well-deserved criticism of Mexican elites?

Even our misguided open door policy has never pacified the vast Mexican underclass, with its explosive grievances, whose anger is better directed at Mexico's moneyed and powerful, descendants of Spanish whites, who have never seriously attempted to make life better for those with brown skin.

The tragedy of Mexican history is that, more than any other people, Mexicans have never escaped their rigidly class-stratified past, absent any roots that resemble a western democracy. So, 120 million Mexicans, both peasants and billionaires, from Chapultepec to Chiapas, who will inhabit the twenty-first century, are already inexorably shaped. Expect more futile uprisings and mini-revolutions, as we act as a safety valve for a government that has both a class-based culture and a history of being a quasi-criminal enterprise.

We can't change Mexico, but they have changed us. How far we will go on our present path will be determined by our response to amnesties and how much we want to carry forward our western ideals.

The DREAM Act needs to remain just that because thoughtfulness only takes place in the wakeful state. We dream when the authoritative activity of the self

has ceased, and we are detached from the reality of the external world.⁷ ■

Endnotes

1. At the time the lame duck session was considering this proposal in 2010, Tom Tancredo's, writing for the Rocky Mountain Foundation, said, "I say the debate is dishonest [especially] the insistence that this amnesty for 2 million individuals will not have any incentive effect.... For the past 30 years, each amnesty has been sold to congress as 'the last amnesty' and each one lays the groundwork for the next."

2. Re Plyler v. Doe: One of the stated reasons for ruling in 1982 that the U.S. should pay for the education of illegal alien children was that there were so few of them at that time and so the cost was easily absorbed.

3. List of Spanish-speaking countries by population; www.spanishlinguist.com/extra/spanish_speaking_countries_figures_and_map.html

4. The grandfather of Texas oil billionaire and philanthropist, Hugh Roy Cullen was Ezekiel Cullen, a member of the Republic of Texas Congress. He appropriated lands in each county of Texas for the purpose of establishing a state-wide system of education for "the children of working folks." Hugh Roy himself only went to the fifth grade and then to work in a candy shop for three dollars a week. So when he made a huge fortune in the oil fields of Texas, the example of his grandfather led to a lifetime interest in education. He took a small junior college in Houston and made it a major university by buying whole departments and filling them with top Ivy League professors. He also built medical schools and hospitals and supported museums, theaters, and symphony orchestras.

5. See www.4icu.org for a fuller discussion of all the many institutions of higher education in Mexico.

6. Marion Lloyd, *The Chronicle of Higher Education (Global)*, Mexico City, September 28, 2010.

7. *From Thoughts about Dreams* by Adolph von Strümpell, 1877 f.