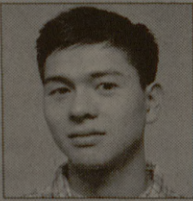


Reality of immigration
lades behind shadow
of mythology, ignorance

Immigrants make up 10 percent of America's population, the largest percentage in 50 years. Last year, the number of green cards issued dropped 27 percent from the year before.

Columnist



Travis Chow
Computer science graduate student

immigration groups' claims. However, the growing number of foreign freeloaders and criminals is a legitimate concern. Instead of pointing fingers at productive individuals, the nation should reform its immigration laws to address the specific problems.

To begin with, we should keep illegal aliens out. The Population Reference Bureau reports 90 percent of immigrant criminals are illegal aliens. In other words, most of the crime is committed by illegal aliens, not legal alien residents. People should keep in mind this sharp distinction between lawful and unlawful immigrants.

In 1993, Operation "Hold the Line" demonstrated the influence of illegal immigration on crime rate along the Texas border. After placing 400 agents along a 20-mile stretch south of El Paso, theft in downtown dropped 40 percent, while citywide crime decreased 29 percent.

Further, illegal aliens should not get a dime from the government. Their mere presence is a crime to society, not to mention their freeloading. Each year about 6,000 aliens cross into Texas to give birth in El Paso hospitals, making their U.S.-born children citizens which are eligible for a suite of federal welfare benefits. The only difference between this loophole and alien smuggling is the womb.

Those who are legally granted residency but choose a life of petty crimes or welfare have no excuse. Immigrants who do not pull their own weight should be deported immediately with no appeals. They had the chance and blew it. It is the immigrants' personal responsibility to "make it" once they take the gamble. Even without marketable skills, earnestness and hard work are enough to live comfortably. There's no room for sympathy here.

Immigration reform must encourage personal responsibility and get alien residents off the safety net — even if the consequences seem heartless at times. This way, many immigration problems can be resolved without closing the nation's doors to talent and diversity.

America should concentrate on cracking down on the specific issues and not condemn immigration on the whole, which actually helps boost the national economy.

Masters of militia
Students hold paranoid beliefs about A&M

In his opening statement last week at the Oklahoma City Federal Building bombing trial, Stephen Jones, defense lawyer for Timothy McVeigh, addressed the extreme views found in McVeigh's writings.

"Much of his (McVeigh's) writing and literature was extreme, but millions of other Americans fear and mistrust the government," he said.

Jones' statement identifies the peculiar legacy of the '90s — a growing mistrust of a government which guarantees personal liberty. While many will casually attribute this paranoia to militia groups, X-Files fanatics, conspiracy theorists and assorted wackos, its origins are much closer to home.

Widely held student beliefs at Texas A&M mirror the fears of militia groups. Fear and mistrust of the government begins with the administration here at A&M. These beliefs make Aggies the militia members of the future.

No, most students do not believe special government forces lurk in black helicopters waiting for the command to seize the nation and place it under martial law. However, many students do hold similar irrational and paranoid beliefs about administration on campus.

Consider commonly held beliefs about Parking Traffic and Transportation Services, PTTS, often called "the parking Nazis," is the most reviled department on campus. Students actually say PTTS targets them as easy sources of income. Students attribute all kinds of evil to this department and its employees.

Tom Williams, Director of PTTS, said PTTS concentrates on doing its job well to benefit A&M.

"The nature of our job is such that I doubt there are very few people who thank us for writing a parking violation," Williams said.

The word "service" is included in the department's title with good reason. PTTS does a difficult and unpopular job. There is only a finite amount of area on campus available for parking. This area must be well regulated. Without PTTS, parking lots would degrade into parking anarchy, inconveniencing everyone who drives on campus.

PTTS officers have not sold their souls to the devil. The department does not hoard student parking spots to force students to park illegally to generate ticket revenue. Likewise, PTTS officers do not hide in bushes waiting for students to fall into their parking traps.

Residence halls on campus are another area where students say they are targeted by the University. Resident advisers working within these halls often fair poorly in public opinion. Many students assume RAs exist to make their lives miser-

Columnist



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able. The misconception is that RAs are merely plain-clothed police officers who wander the halls looking for policy violations. This "us against them" mentality is unfortunate and unnecessary.

RAs within residence halls are a valuable source of information and guidance. They exist as a service — not a hindrance to residents.

One last organization which students are paranoid about is the Board of Regents. Students complain this group is out of touch

with campus, and that it milks them for all the money they have.

However, of all the campus conspiracy theories, the beliefs surrounding the Board of Regents hold most truth. Ironically, the truth in these stories is rooted in student behavior.

If the Board is out of touch with students, it is because students do not voice their concerns to the Board. Before meetings, regents hold an open house for students. These open house events are poorly attended. Most students cannot even name one member of the Board. Indeed, A&M is run by a star chamber, one which has been appointed and endorsed by the students themselves.

But A&M is not out to get students, and neither is the U.S. government. This type of poorly-thought-out paranoia reflects badly on the intellect of students. The University's administration occasionally may be bureaucratic, slow or even inept, but it works in the best interests of students.

A&M's students should be proud of themselves. They can no longer be accused of being redneck, backwood, ignorant hicks. No, the Aggies of the '90s are future, radical conspiracy-minded extremists.

It's time to start stockpiling weapons. Congratulations students, you're members of the largest organized militia in America — the Republic of Texas A&M.



New government proposal overlooks definition of volunteering

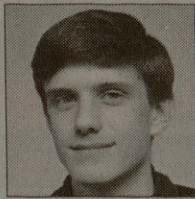
Ross Perot isn't the only one rambling on about "volunteers" these days.

Most everyone with some contact to the outside world has heard about Bill Clinton and Al Gore's "Service Summit" in Philadelphia, which wraps up today. Joined by well-meaning, but misguided, individuals such as Gen. Colin Powell and Barbara Bush, Clinton donned a ridiculous-looking cap and painted over some inner-city graffiti (no word as to whether he used Sherman-Williams' new "White Water.") Dedicated to the premise that Americans are selfish and lazy, with no intentions of helping their fellow man, the "Service Summit" promotes the oxymoronic ideas of "mandatory volunteering" and "paid volunteers."

Aware that taxpayers are growing cynical of the traditional liberal method of solving problems, which is throwing taxpayer money at it, Clinton and Gore have stumbled upon the more modern, liberal cure-all for the 21st century — throwing taxpayer-funded, compulsory "volunteers" at it.

Bill and Al can hire all the mandatory volunteers they want, but in the end it does

Columnist



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nothing to address the real issues facing America. Our problems exist, not because there are not enough volunteers, but because there is too much government.

The Green Berets of Clinton's "volunteer army" are his much-glorified reading coaches. Ignoring that teachers are paid to teach children to read, he has promised a force of a million volunteers to go into schools and teach America's children to read (presumably leaving teachers free to resume their NEA-mandated duties of condom distribution and diversity awareness training).

Rather than draw the ire of leftist teachers' unions, such as the National Education Association by proposing the real solution to illiteracy, he licks his finger, sticks it into the wind and passes the buck to the "paid volunteers."

The real solution doesn't lie in another government program, more spending and more bureaucracy. After all, these government volunteers must be regulated somehow. It is no coincidence that the quality of American education rapidly deteriorated after so-called teachers' unions seized control of schools through a federal Depart-

ment of Education. Volunteers won't conquer illiteracy, but abolishing the department and adopting national school choice and school voucher programs will.

Children aren't reading, not because they are sitting in their classrooms desperately waiting for the volunteers, but because Clinton and Gore's philosophy on education is a complete failure. Children are illiterate because the three Rs have been replaced by the three Hs — hand out condoms, hammer Western culture and hustle government dependency.

For example, instead of teaching children about our heritage, textbooks now teach kids about left-wing pop stars. In one history text, colonial patriot Ethan Allan is ignored while lesbian singer Joan Baez is featured. Another states "some people feel China's economic progress is worth its sacrifice of individual freedom." Some schools even teach "creative spelling," in which teach-

ers are warned not to correct a child's poor spelling, because doing so would damage his self-esteem. Teachers are told to appreciate the child's creativity (or more accurately, bad education).

These atrocities are imposed on innocent children by the spaced-out NEA crowd. Abolishing their DOE, and not recruiting a volunteer army is the only way to bring sanity and literacy back to American education.

Getting government out of education will do more per tax dollar than paying volunteers. One year of public education costs over twice per student as much as per student as a year of private education (\$5,000-\$6,000 for public schools compared to an average of \$2,000 for private schools). Not only is the privatization of education more cost effective, private schools give a more superior education than public schools.

School choice and school voucher programs prove, time after time, that children score higher in a school freed from the left-handed grip of the DOE than in a liberal

school system. The overwhelming success of these programs in places like Milwaukee and inner-city Harlem prove school choice and school vouchers for the poor, not volunteers, will guarantee America's children a quality education. Instead, the Clinton/Gore White House vetoed school vouchers for poor African-American children in inner-city Washington. They also have publicly stated their opposition to this program designed to give the poor a top-notch education.

The passage of school vouchers and choice legislation would spell doom for the ultra-liberal teachers' unions which poured millions into Democratic campaign coffers. Rather than listen to the pleas of poor children and the overwhelming majority of Americans who want choice in schools and vouchers, Clinton and Gore listen to their wallets. Their volunteer army to supposedly combat illiteracy is nothing more than a shameless attempt to cover up a shoddy education record.

Clinton and Gore's Service Summit is only a celebration of demagoguery. Americans should volunteer their time and efforts to make their communities a better place to live, but it shouldn't take a government mandate and a taxpayer-subsidized paycheck to do it.

Bill and Al can hire all the mandatory volunteers they want, but in the end it does nothing to address the real issues facing America.