

'Give me your tired, your poor ...'

United States should reopen borders to all immigrants, allow economic opportunity



BRENDAN GUY

The United States is a nation of immigrants. This has always been one of America's main strengths, as it has enabled us to take the best and brightest of other nations and allow them to use their creativity to enrich the United States.

There is even a certain statue in New York City dedicated to the principle that the United States will welcome people from all over the world to its shores. Unfortunately, the generous American spirit of welcoming immigrants has been fading throughout much of the 20th century. Instead, Americans now call it for tight restrictions on immigration. This move away from open immigration has been a tragic blow to the United States both economically and culturally.

There is absolutely no reason to fear immigration. Immigrants have always been a resource to America in the past, giving us the needed human capital resources to fully develop this country. Why would they not continue to be of value to America in the future?

The claim that immigrants just want to come to the United States to take advantage of welfare and other government services is absurd. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reveals that only 12.8 percent of immigrants use some type of government welfare, compared to 13.9 percent of the native population. This suggests that not only will most immigrants stay off welfare, but they are actually likely to be more productive than the native-born population. By their nature, most immigrants are ambitious, energetic people who want to build better lives for themselves and their children.

These are the kind of people we need in America, people with drive and ambition, people who are not afraid to take risks. Despite certain loathsome steps towards the left, the United States is still the land of opportunity, not the land of welfare handouts. Immigrants to this country understand this and come to America with the intention of working to improve themselves, to seize control of their own destinies.

What they wanted was to have a paternalistic government take care of them, they would not be coming to America, they would be going to a welfare state like Canada or Sweden.

Of course, it is frequently this daring spirit which

causes people to fear immigrants. Another common argument against immigration is that immigrants will take jobs away from Americans, an argument that is just as invalid as the welfare argument. Immigrants are frequently poorly educated, unskilled labor. They are at a severe competitive disadvantage with native workers. This usually leads to immigrants being forced into the most menial, miserable work available (work most American workers would not want to do in the first place). But by doing this work (and especially by doing it at low wages), immigrants end up helping the economy. They pump more money into the economy through their own spending and help American companies stay competitive against foreign competition by providing a cheap source of labor.

Also the same daring spirit that brings immigrants to the United States in the first place can also help to produce entrepreneurs, which means immigrants or at least their children frequently end up founding businesses of their own. The proof for all of this can be seen by a Cato Institute report, which studied immigration during the 1980s and concluded that the states with the highest rates of immigration also had the highest rates of economic growth and the lowest rates of unemployment.

This seems to prove that immigrants will not take away jobs from native Americans, and instead will actually help make more jobs available.

But despite the obvious economic advantages of open immigration, some still fear the cultural impact. It is a common misconception that immigrants will come here with their own languages, customs and religions, resist all attempts at assimilation and end up being a source of conflict and strife.

Benjamin Franklin voiced these very concerns about German immigration during the early national period. Yet today, German-Americans are the largest single nationality in this country and have assimilated beautifully. This charge has also been raised against every subsequent wave of immigrants including the Irish, Italians, Jews, Asians or Hispanics, and it has never been shown to have any validity.

Of course immigrants are going to want to follow their native customs as closely as possible, but they have never shown any general refusal to obey the laws and dominant cultural beliefs of the United States.

Most immigrants understand that at least some assimilation is necessary if they want to survive in



ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

the United States and work to fit into American society while still keeping what is best from their own culture.

Strength comes from diversity, that is a basic principle of evolution that can also be applied to the affairs of nations. Immigrants provide that diversity to American society, they help to bring new ideas and approaches to America, and they provide

valuable and usually thankless labor that helps make the entire country more prosperous. Open immigration helped make the United States great in the 19th century, we should return to it if we want to continue to be great in the 21st century.

Brendan Guy is a senior political science and history major.

First Amendment free speech should not be absolute, unlimited

Congress shall make no law ... bridging the freedom of speech, or of the press ..."



LISA FOOX

Sound familiar? To the average American, freedom of speech is a catchphrase that encompasses a variety of ideas. In fact, in a sense, freedom of speech could allow certain Americans the right to insult, degrade, and humiliate the minority.

Freedom of speech should not necessarily be so all-encompassing. The First Amendment is indeed almost absolute at this point in time. Not so long ago, the Supreme Court granted Americans the right to burn the American flag as an expression of their opinion of the U.S. government.

One of the only big no-no's in the annals of American history is to scream "fire" in a crowded theater. The clause exists because people may be killed in the mad stampede to escape the burning (well — not really burning) building. This clause in the free speech campaign is to protect the people.

Well, using that logic, it appears that freedom of speech should be curtailed a little more than it is right now.

When people preach hatred and bigotry, racism and absolutism, people can get hurt, maimed or killed.

How so? Take for example David Duke, a former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. He continuously spouts hatred of the minorities that live in America. It appears that he truly believes he has the answer to solving the country's problems.

He thinks that if society could just get rid of the blacks, Jews, Mexicans, Asians, and homosexuals, all the economic and social evils would disappear.

Hardly. But there are people who believe what he claims, and some of these people choose to take the law into their own hands and "take care of the problem." People have died as a result of David Duke's preaching as surely as if they were trampled in a crowded theater.

There should be a fine or a punishment for David Duke.

Another example: Joseph McCarthy. The words he chose to say caused a great deal of harm to many innocent American citizens and his legacy is a blot upon the conscience of the American government. His moment in the spotlight did not improve society.

Flag burning, on the other hand, it something it is necessary to talk about. There are thousands of people every year who want to enter this country. They are desperate to come here and many have waited years to have the chance to live in America, where food, clothing and

jobs are available. So, if someone is so upset with America they need to burn the flag for which soldiers have died (in the name of freedom, no less), these people should make their voices heard by leaving America. Legalizing flag burning was a mistake on the part of the Supreme Court.

How does all of this relate to Texas A&M University? Well, somewhere in the darkened halls of Sterling C. Evans Library there is a collection of Holocaust literature. Among the books are a few that claim the Holocaust never happened. It's called "negationism" and it is false. So why are those books in Evans? Because of the freedom of speech. In this case, freedom of speech is harmful. It allows a generation already unfamiliar with the horror to doubt the reality of the murder of millions.

Most people who claim that free speech should be absolute are using a

"marketplace of ideas" theory, where every addition to discourse adds some new perspective and some new insights and therefore, all are worthy of being heard.

But when voices that promote hatred and ignorance, and nothing else, are heard, they drown out the message of the few pure and more enlightened voices.

Mahatma Gandhi would have been condemned, if not killed, by the Ku Klux Klan.

There is never a reason to allow the minority to not be heard — except when the minority is so strident, so hateful, that people can get hurt. There should be punishments for those who infringe on other people's right to exist peacefully. Even if that means an abridgment of the First Amendment.

Lisa Foox is a senior journalism major.

MAIL CALL

Malcolm X, writer appear uninformed

In response to Christian Robbins' 16 opinion column.

Robbins' comments concerning Malcolm X in general, and white perception of blacks and Malcolm X in particular, are hyperbolic and needlessly incendiary. Malcolm X is widely and soundly criticized, in part, because of his separatist positions.

Instead of a personified melting pot as our forefathers, both black and white envisioned, X would have had us live in the same country, yet interact only with each other if absolutely necessary.

From her precariously established pulpit, Robbins segues into her own disenchanting viewpoints. Robbins would have us believe that even today African-Americans do not have the human rights guaranteed them under the law."

It must strike Robbins as amazing that the only human rights violations reported in today's newspaper were those occurring in Kosovo. Apparently there is substance to the

"shadow government" conspiracy theory. It would also be enlightening to discover which school it was that turned down any student with a 4.0 GPA and a 1600 SAT score.

To insinuate that "the success of the African-American community in such a short time collectively scares caucasian America" is stereotypical and highly insulting.

This professes the same ignorance as would a white person who believes that all blacks are thieving gang members. The search on this campus for this mysterious "someone" who thinks that Rodney King was not the recipient of excessive force would also be a revelation.

Please try to keep the ambiguity and ignorance out of your forthcoming articles.

My last question is that if you feel the position of yell leader should be reserved for the Corps, why don't you spend all of your hostile energy on trying to remove it from the student body elections ballot and have only the Corps make those decisions?

Albert Atkins
Class of '01

Most Christians not offensive, pushy

In response to David Lee's April 19 opinion column.

In your article, you state that students of this university shouldn't "push their beliefs onto others," however, you seem to single out Christians as the biggest offenders.

True, Christ instructs Christians to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20).

However, you must realize that every time that anyone declares

their opinion, they are expecting people to listen and somehow change their way of life from what they hear. The only difference between what you have said and the truth is that the recipient of the message is always given the option to not listen or change.

I have been a Christian all of my life, and yet I have never attempted to pester another person into believing what I do, and I have never witnessed any other Christian do so.

I have handed out tracts, written pro-Christian articles, and participated in Christian events. However, this is no more "forcing" my opinions on them as the student government candidates who gave out fliers, set up Web pages and held rallies did.

Even if we did aggressively try to force "our slant of Christianity" down someone's throat, it would be worthless. People are rarely converted from one religion to another by simply hearing about it. However, if we can demonstrate to others, by our attitudes and actions, that our religion gives us something unique, perhaps they

would consider becoming a Christian.

Rather than attack and incense the entirety of the Christian community, why not discuss your feelings with that minority of Christians who have aggressively tried to force their beliefs on you? Instead of turning around and forcing your opinion down their throat, just say you aren't interested.

No one can stop you from not hearing.

Jonathan L. Deonarine,
Class of '02

Bart Fehr
Class of '00

Mail Call proves hostility on campus

In response to Ronnie Kirschner's April 19 mail call.

Ronnie Kirschner's ranting and

My second question is do you get this riled up when a student who is not in the Corps wildcats or stands up to sing the Fight Song? I would hope not.

The non-reg population of students now makes up the majority of people on this campus today, without that population the University would still be an all-male military training program, not the world-class University that it is.