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**Until it happens to you...** Posted by: phatkhat on Jan 24, 2009 10:15 AM Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]  
Immigration has always been kind of a non-issue for me. I boycotted back in the Chavez days, because migrant workers deserve a fair wage. I certainly have a lot of sympathy for ANY workers who are underpaid and overworked.

But the situation is out of hand, and has gotten that way largely because of the policies of the Bush Administration. He welcomed in low-wage workers to help out his big corporate buddies and family, and didn't care about American workers.

I do NOT support amnesty. I do support stiffer controls on who comes in, and enforcing visa time limits. (If you think that all the illegal immigrants come hidden in trunks and stuff...LOL. A lot of them come in tour buses with tourist visas, and simply never go back.) I also support HUGE penalties on any company that hires undocumented immigrants.

So why is this a hot issue for me now? My husband is a truck driver. (He, like many other truckers, has a college degree and is an intelligent man, in case some of the resident latte sippers don't feel comfortable with blue collar people, LOL.) GWB pushed a policy that would allow Mexican trucks to come freely into the US to haul freight, much more freely than the Canadians are allowed to. This was to alleviate the perceived "driver shortage". What it really means is that the companies that pay an American driver 35 cents a mile could pay a Mexican 17 cents a mile.

Hubby found himself sitting idle a lot, along with a lot of other Anglo and Black drivers, and also noticed a whole lot of non-English speaking Latinos showing up on the yards. None of them sat idle for long. Eventually, he quit, and went looking for a gas field hauling job locally. We later learned through Landline Magazine that the owner of his old company, CalArk, had been fined \$50K for buying fake visas for undocumented drivers.

In addition to the Latinos, trucking companies in both the US and Canada actively recruit drivers from other Eastern European and third world countries. You will find a lot of them working for the so-called "coolie carriers" like Swift and USA Trucks. A lot of them do not speak English, and they do not understand our traffic laws.

**We live in a small town in Arkansas, where they are drilling for gas.** Before the drilling started, we had a Latino population of perhaps .5%. Now, it is probably 12-15%. We even have a couple of new Spanish speaking churches and a Latino grocery store. These people, both documented and undocumented, came for the work - and a lot were simply brought by the drilling companies.

**WE, the people of this area, were promised economic bliss from the gas companies. Oh, JOBS would be created, and we would become prosperous. Sounded good, as unemployment here is pretty high. Well, the jobs didn't materialize, because workers were imported rather than hiring locally. We have noise, traffic, and pollution - our water is ruined - but no jobs. :-)**

**A couple of water haulers started hiring locally, and hubby got a job. \$16/hr, which is very good for this area. Four weeks later, he was "laid off".** No work. But we drove by the yard, and saw a lot of trucks and Latinos - no Anglos. A couple of guys I know have gone through several companies, with the same process. Get hired, get laid off, and the immigrants get the jobs. Go to next company and repeat. And I seriously doubt that they are paid \$16/hr.

Multiply this by the labor situation all over the US, and you get the picture. You have to understand that AMERICAN CITIZENS who work blue collar and service economy jobs are FURIOUS about this. If you are out of touch with anything outside the white collar realm, you may not understand this.

**RE: Until it happens to you...**

Posted by: gar1948 on Jan 24, 2009 12:58 PM Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]  
**Excellent! Well written. I, too, live in Arkansas where the gas drilling is going on and I have witnessed the very things you describe. I have driver friends this has happened to.**