

Samuel Rodriguez's Proposed Immigration Reform May Be the Solution America Needs

Immigration reform is one of the most pressing issues facing our country right now. But with the right legislation, I believe it's an issue America can fix. I recently signed my name to a creative solution that I think could actually work. Rev. Samuel Rodriguez's National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC) presented this proposal in an attempt to protect both immigrant families and our borders. Could this be the practical solution America needs right now? To hear my full thoughts on this matter, [click here](#) or scroll down to the end of this article to listen to my podcast.

I learned about this proposed immigration coalition last week, when the NHCLC invited me to speak about religious liberty at one of its conferences. I shared about how President Donald Trump has been a strong supporter of religious freedom and how the left is challenging our religious liberties in a way many of us couldn't have imagined a few decades ago—all of which I talk about in my latest book, *Trump Aftershock*. During that conference, NHCLC representatives handed out the proposal for conservative immigration reform, which I was happy to endorse.

Other organizations have drafted immigration reform proposals, although most of them are on the far left and many, I would even say, are sponsored in some way by George Soros. In fact, he funds several left-of-center evangelical groups that deal with social-justice issues. But I believe the NHCLC's proposal offers a wise, biblical approach to this hot-button issue. My friend Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, president of the NHCLC, has been able to be a strong voice in the White House, articulating to President Donald Trump the issues American Hispanics care about. For this reason, I have high hopes for this proposed

reform.

In fact, I want to share the proposal with you in its entirety. If you agree with it, I encourage you to share it on your social media so people know we can reform our immigration policies in a way that combines strength and compassion, principles and pragmatism.

Below is the NHCLC's proposal for a conservative coalition for immigration reform:

Illegal immigration has been festering for decades. Much of the blame rests on our political leaders who have refused to enforce the law. But we now have a chance to fix it. Millions of employers of immigrants, as well as the Hispanic community and Christians, will rally around a plan that combines rule of law, decency and common sense.

To speak in biblical language, the immigration cause no longer resides in the Egypt of political apathy or the desert of expediency. Today, this just cause stands before the Jordan called reform. With prophetic courage, spiritual fortitude and political will, we can cross into the promise land of "Just Integration." This will protect our values, our borders and the American dream for future generations.

As Christians, we believe it is time to reconcile border security with the security of our values—values that include faith and family.

Secure Borders and Enforce the Law

First, we must secure our national borders. To do that, we must stop illegal immigration. This should include the construction of a wall that incorporates both physical elements and technology, as well as a firewall against tunnels and other intrusions. This will win the trust of the American people and prevent more illegals from arriving.

Many countries, such as Mexico, treat illegal immigrants as foreign enemies. The least we can do is secure our borders. But it hasn't been a priority.

Many illegals didn't sneak across the border. They overstayed their visas. This is a problem with law enforcement and record-keeping rather than border control. If the government can keep track of Social Security checks and income tax returns, surely it can keep track of these immigrants.

We should secure the unity of the immediate family by deporting all undocumented individuals who have or are now engaged in crimes such as murder, sex related, drug related, gang activities and so forth, while making sure God-fearing, hardworking, undocumented families stay intact.

What do we do with the thousands who have just crossed the border? If we do nothing, we will inspire many more to make the same costly journey across Mexico. A better option is to give recent arrivals food, water, a change of clothes, emergency health care when needed and transportation back home. This should be part of a message to our neighbors to the south that no one can hope to become an American in this way.

Legal Status, Not Amnesty: Guest Worker Program

Second, establish a non-amnesty path toward legal status and/or citizenship for those who qualify. Those who wish to become guest workers can apply to become permanent residents. This guest worker program would apply only to those who are now employed or contributing to our economy. Adults who came into this nation illegally and who are not dependent on government subsidies can apply for permanent residency status. But they can only apply for citizenship if they return to their country of origin, go to the back of the line and proceed with the application process without special accommodation. The children of these individuals, however,

would not have to return to their countries of origin to become citizens.

Employers Must Take Responsibility

Third, as part of this comprehensive reform which will resolve this festering national issue for the long run, employers must accept their responsibilities. They should be required going forward to use e-Verify to document that every employee they hire is legally entitled to work. Those who have current employees who are not legal to work, but whom they consider crucial to their operations, should have the option of sponsoring those immigrants. Many employers would jump at a chance to fix the problem without losing reliable, contributing employees. The provision for this already exists in law, allowing friends or family members to file an Affidavit of Support, promising that prospective legal immigrants will not become a “public charge.” [Immigration and Nationality Act sections 212 (a)(4) and 213A.]

As another part of this comprehensive reform, that sponsorship should become more robust. Laws should be revised to make it easier for state and local governments to refuse benefits to “sponsored” immigrants, referring them to their sponsors—who have agreed to take on the responsibility of helping them in times of need. This balanced proposal will help employers keep genuinely crucial employees, provided they are willing to assume the responsibilities of sponsors. That requirement will prevent employer involvement from being a meaningless exercise in “box-checking,” and incentivize them to sponsor only workers with proven track records and good character who contribute to our country.

Assimilate

Fourth, we must assimilate immigrants and guest workers. This should include training in civics and English. There’s nothing magical about English. But it’s the primary language

in the U.S. A common language unites people. Immigrants are much more likely to succeed if they learn English. The other option is what Mark Steyn calls “reverse assimilation” where the immigrant culture displaces the native culture. This is already happening in Muslim immigration to Europe.

Many of our schools now attack rather than build up our culture. If individuals come here from Vietnam or Venezuela and enroll in an American history class at a nearby college, they are likely to learn about the faults but not the virtues of our country. This is not the way to make new citizens. We must roll back anti-Americanism in our public institutions or create other institutions to help immigrants assimilate. Anti-Americanism harms immigrants. It keeps them from embracing our culture. There are many ministries that work with immigrants and refugees, and they should play a role in this effort. This is an area in which ministries and the government could work together.

Work, not Welfare

Fifth, we should reform programs that discourage work. As Milton Friedman once said, “You cannot simultaneously have free immigration and a welfare state.” Some come to the U.S. as political refugees with help from Christian ministries. Rather than seek gainful employment, though, they get sucked into Social Security income and other benefits. This prevents them from contributing to society. It also breeds resentment. People of faith should take the lead in helping immigrants find jobs, and help them fight the temptation to become wards of the state.

Conclusion

In the last few decades, the U.S. government has failed to secure its borders and enforce immigration laws. It’s also become a vast welfare state. Even immigrants who want to work can end up on the public dole. Many of our schools and

government agencies now reject American ideals and prevent immigrants from assimilating. These policies often have turned immigration into a burden rather than an asset.

No solution to this challenge will be perfect. Some 12 million people live in the U.S. illegally. Many of them have been here for years, have jobs and have children in public schools. That makes the problem different from a crime like shoplifting. What we do with illegal immigrants who have been here for years is one thing. How we handle future illegal immigration is another.

We can't deport 12 million people. But blanket amnesty would discourage the law-abiding and encourage even more illegal immigration. And it would also be unfair to the millions who have entered, live and work here legally and millions of others still waiting in line.

We believe this proposal reconciles the rule of law with compassion, conviction with courage and policy with pragmatism. It can help make America great again.

—The National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

I salute the NHCLC for taking the lead and coming up with what I believe is a very workable solution to America's immigration crisis. I encourage you to join me in supporting this proposal. And be sure to click on my podcast below to hear more of my thoughts on this interesting proposal.