

## Immigration & Energy

Illegal Aliens... Immoral detention... babies ripped from mothers' arms... national security... cages... racism... Wait a minute... In the midst of all the heated words journalists are using on the U.S.—Mexico border one word is missing... Energy.

That's right... energy. People from Central America and Mexico—and no small number from the rest of the world—are making expensive and often dangerous journeys – breaking U.S. law in the process – because they want the life abundant, affordable energy provides. Don't get me wrong, a high functioning, liberal democracy is what they are really after, but energy is an essential part of that equation.

We are so spoiled by our wealth of electricity and transportation options that we don't even think about it. But the people crossing the border do. When their left foot leaves Mexico and their right foot lands in the United States, their world improves in a multitude of life-changing ways. Political commentator Jonah Goldberg said it best when he wrote it's like, "they are moving to the future."

Many of these people are coming from areas where there is a scarcity of running water, indoor plumbing and flush toilets. What water is available often isn't clean. Bumpy dirt roads are the norm and even the paved roads can be treacherous. Many homes don't have electricity and the power isn't always on. All the things Americans take for granted are considered luxuries in the developing world.

And while life in America is much more pleasant and offers more opportunity, that's only the beginning of the benefits abundant, affordable energy provide. When a low-skilled laborer crosses the border he or she automatically becomes far more productive. This increased productivity doesn't come from the worker, but from the society he is entering. That's because our modern economy is filled with advanced infrastructure and machinery, laws that are generally followed, more efficient institutions and many other multipliers that enhance productivity.

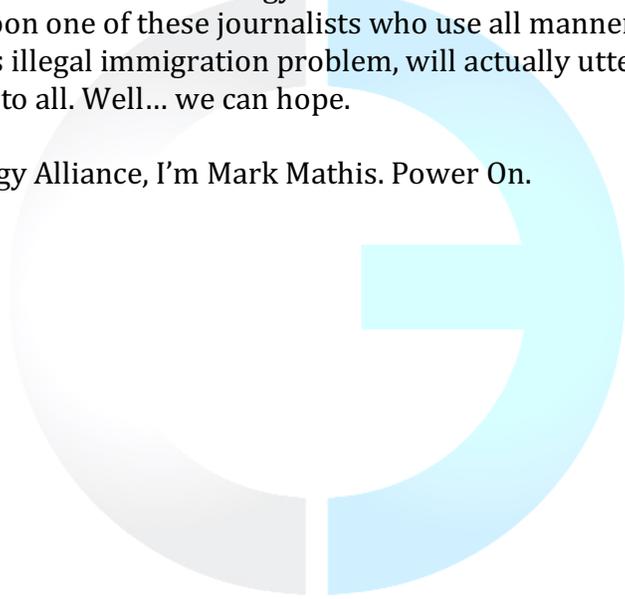
One study found that agricultural laborers in the U.S. were four times more productive than people doing the same work in Brazil. All the efficiencies of the American economy provide higher wages as well. In a 2009 study produced by the Harvard Kennedy School, researchers found that laborers in the U.S. earned wages that were two and a half to three and a half times higher than workers doing the same jobs in Mexico and Central America. And those workers made far more than laborers in energy-starved nations such as Yemen, Nigeria and Egypt.

One of the clichés we hear when news reporters talk about people entering the United States illegally is that immigrants want a better life for themselves and their children. No doubt they do. But then these same news organizations turn around

and report on how terrible the United States is because of our energy production and energy use.

Makes you wonder why these people, who are paid to be curious investigators, never seem to connect these two things. The United States is exceptional in large part because of the abundance of energy that created and sustains it to this day. Maybe someday soon one of these journalists who use all manner of words to describe America's illegal immigration problem, will actually utter the word that should be obvious to all. Well... we can hope.

For the Clear Energy Alliance, I'm Mark Mathis. Power On.



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