

# Point: America's arms must remain open

BY KATE MALEKOFF  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

United States has always proclaimed a tradition of welcoming newcomers who seek better lives regardless of their race, religion, livelihood, or political views. After all, this nation was founded on such principles. Legal immigrants totaling 1.27 million entered the United States in 2006. What intensifies the debate is the number of illegal immigrants who populate the nation.

Predictions suggest over 700,000 immigrants come to the United States illegally each year, literally risking their lives to find what they hope is a better future. They find work in factories or in situations requiring tedious labor, both of which pay minimally; their superiors most likely suspect their employees are living in the country illegally yet choose to turn their heads because the laborers work so cheaply. Because of their illegal status, the immigrants do not receive benefits like health insurance; consequently, many of them cannot afford doctor visits for illnesses or preventative care, and help is hard to find.

Continuing debates between Democrats and Republicans about immigration focus on the issues of economics, health, education, politics, and the environment. Several conservatives hold a firm stance that illegal immigrants are taking jobs that unemployed Americans need, and others echo the same belief when

the unemployment rate is high. However, immigrants are willing to take jobs that many Americans, especially the Baby Boomer generation, are not willing to take because of both the extremely low wages and lack of health benefits. Conservatives also feel that because many illegal immigrants do not pay taxes, our federal and state payments are used to help not only taxpaying Americans, but also immigrants merely reaping the benefits. However, how could anyone ignore the basic needs of a child? As the wealthiest nation in the country, we should be jumping at the chance to help those in need, especially here at home. Many immigrants have risked everything they have, left family and friends behind to search for a better life in our country, and the least we can do is show some compassion.

One of the only times President Bush has actually made a smart move during his term of office occurred as he encouraged both parties in the Senate to unite on the issue of immigration by forming a compromise. Bush certainly knows about the benefits of immigration, considering he is from Texas, a state highly dependent upon migrant workers. If immigrants in the Lone Star State were forced to leave, the state would certainly feel the effects.

Democrat Kay Hagan, running for U.S. Senator in North Carolina, may be quite instrumental in executing this compromise, which I determined after listening to her speak-



State Senator Kay Hagan presently seeks a seat in the U.S. Senate. Hagan's stance on immigration has raised awareness throughout North Carolina, thus urging citizens to influence legislative changes.

ing on National Public Radio a month ago. She stated that this nation must follow the laws currently in place regarding immigration, but it is necessary to start creating new laws to allow immigrants to enter the country safely and legally without the necessity of walls. The last enactment to deal with such issues was the 1990 Immigration Act, which allowed for a maximum of 700,000 immigrants and increased visas by 40 percent.

In 1996, the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, along with the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, increased the category of criminal

activity that allowed deportation of immigrants from the U.S. Clinton was President at this time, Michael Jordan was still playing professional basketball for the Chicago Bulls, and Princess Diana and Prince Charles had just divorced. Obviously, times have changed, so policies deserve the attention of reconsideration.

Government officials must find a way for individuals who desire to live in the United States to enjoy the many benefits this nation has to offer. America prospers because of multiculturalism. It would be a shame to defy the tradition and cornerstone upon which predecessors built this country's foundation.

## Counterpoint: America is for Americans

BY GORDIE MCDIARMID  
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Supporters of amnesty for illegal immigrants argue the undocumented workers are doing the work that many Americans will not tolerate because of low wages. They also dispute these aliens do not profit from our health care system and other government-aid agencies. I argue it is not America's problem. Our government has the obligation to take care of us, the American citizens. Why should we take care of individuals who have entered our country illegally?

Arriving in the United States illegally are 700,000 to 800,000 immigrants each year. With our employment rate at 4.7%, statistics I find astonishing, we have a major problem. I cannot imagine citizens willingly accepting unemployment as opposed to job security. Is it not the American dream to prosper by working hard and achieving greatness following a modest beginning? It is

difficult to achieve success without starting points from which to launch one's progress.

Over eight million illegal immigrants currently reside in this nation. To grant them amnesty would only dishonor the hard work that many immigrants endured to become legal citizens. California currently spends \$8 million per year on educating illegal immigrants, which is \$8 million of our taxes that benefit individuals who have no right being in the U.S. since they entered the country illegally and do not contribute to the tax system. It just does not seem right to punish our own citizens so that others can benefit, when they do not even show us the respect of entering our country legally.

When discussing the politics concerning immigration today, I agree that our policies must change. More border security and tougher penalties on those caught crossing the border illegally should be the new policy on immigration. Terrorism is a major problem in today's society.



Officers search each car trying to cross into the United States border in New York. Since 2000, over 700,000 illegal immigrants have entered the United States each year.

"In this age of terror, immigration is not only an economic issue but also a national security issue," said former governor of Arkansas and Republican presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee.

I agree. If immigrants would rather sneak into this country than apply for a visa and complete the other tasks required to become a citizen, then we should deny them any leniency.

### Volume 84 Issue 4

The *High Life* Staff welcomes comments in the form of letters to the editor from students, faculty, and the reading public. Letters may be turned in to the office. All letters must be signed. The staff reserves the right to reject any letter containing libelous statements, the right to edit for length and grammatical errors, and the right to ascertain the truthfulness of its content. The *High Life* is published nine times a year and is produced by the students of Grimsley High School, 801 Westover Terrace, Greensboro, NC 27408. The *High Life* functions as a medium for creative journalistic pursuits as well as a training instrument for aspiring journalists, artists, and writer. The *High Life* functions as a public forum for student expression. **Editors-in-Chief:** Emily Harden and Kate Malekoff, **Executive Copy Editor:** Rachel Weinstock, **News Editor:** Courtney Brown, **Opinion Editor:** Elizabeth Detmar, **Features Editors:** Gordie McDiarmid and Katherine Phillips, **Sports Editor:** Daniel Aronson, **Advertising Manager:** Leigh Joyce, **Photographer:** Brittney Pace, **Staff Writer:** Blair Bloomquist, **Reporters:** Jennifer Brooks, Meredith Harman, Mandy Hiatt, **Adviser:** Lynn Rozelman.