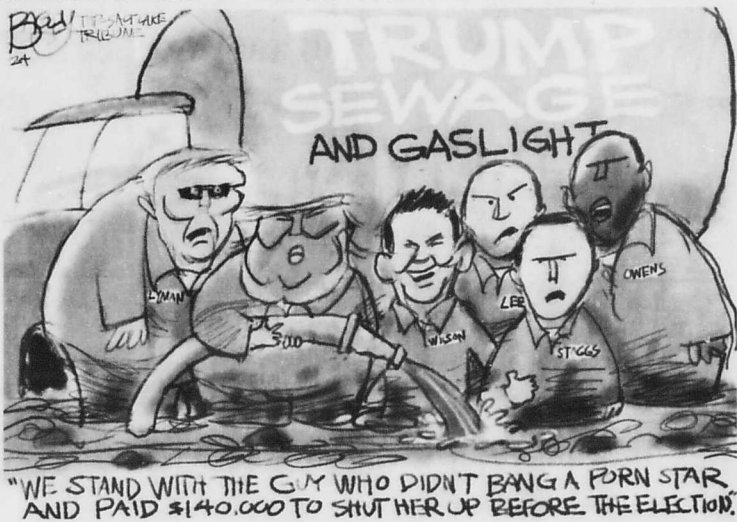


OPINION

BAGLEY'S VIEW » "TRUMP TOADIES"



Anti-immigration promises from Utah politicians threaten economy

In our post-decency age, politicians who promise to stand watch at the U.S.-Mexico border and keep out imagined hordes of dirty, drug-dealing migrants may no longer offend Americans' sense of compassion and fairness.

But such posturing is a promise to do serious and lasting damage to America's, and Utah's, economy.

Our social and economic vitality depends on immigration. It always has. It always will. Americans have always known that. The fact that the "swarm of officers" King George III sent to manage the colonies made it difficult for immigrants to come to America was one of the enumerated complaints against the British crown in the Declaration of Independence.

Utahns have always known that. In a state founded by refugees from persecution and violence, compassion for the newcomer was once the Utah Way, advocated by government officials, civic leaders and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Those are voices too little heard from today. Anyone who claims a political, economic or moral leadership role in our society should be insisting on humane, meaningful immigration reform now.

If any of Utah's politicians disagree — if they think they should ignore real concerns such as the environment, housing and health and instead campaign on promises of not only closing our borders but also rounding up and expelling large numbers of immigrants who are already here — they should ask our construction contractors.

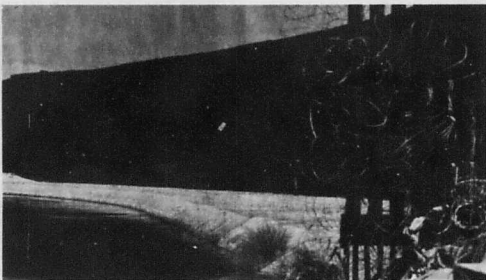
Our chambers of commerce. Our health care administrators. Our farmers, restaurants, hotels and resorts.

They should ask the entrepreneurs and public officials who envision a shiny new downtown Salt Lake City, complete with a remodeled sports arena.

Who will we employ to help build our high-rises? To fix our streets? To staff the hospitals and care centers that our aging population will need?

Vicente Fox, who was president of Mexico from 2000 to 2006, was refreshingly frank about all this when he visited Salt Lake City recently.

An improving Mexican economy is keeping more workers home, Fox said, and the United States will be forced to turn to other Latin American and Caribbean nations to make up the shortfall. And that, he rightly noted, will be a lot more difficult if the United States fails to get



The border wall between San Luis Rio Colorado, Mexico, and San Luis, Ariz., is shown on Aug. 14, 2022.

its immigration act together.

Time after time over the last generation, immigration reform measures have been proposed and have died. The most recent example was a bipartisan immigration and border security package worked out early this year by the Biden administration and leaders of the U.S. Senate.

Nobody thought it was perfect. There was nothing to protect the rights of immigrants already here, even the so-called Dreamers who arrived as children.

But the package would have done a lot to ramp up the legal infrastructure needed to process asylum claims in weeks instead of months, or years. It would have provided financial aid to cities and states dealing with influxes of migrants and provided a legal mechanism for the president to close the border when the number of people crossing exceeded certain limits.

The measure seemed riling toward approval when the visage of former President Donald Trump returned to ruin everything. Petrified that something good might actually happen on border security, and that President Joe Biden might get the credit, Trump's congressional sycophants torpedoed the legislation at the last minute.

Utah Sen. Mitt Romney was one of four Republicans with the courage to support the measure, while Sen. Mike Lee was among those shamefully toying the Trump line and voting to kill it.

All the Republicans running for the U.S. Senate and House from Utah now need to be asked: Your party blocked the best chance at border reform rather than let a Democratic president get the credit. If there is still a Democrat in the White House next year, will you do that again?

Nobody thinks America should throw open its borders and allow just anyone to saunter in. Every nation needs a system to keep out criminals, terrorists, illegal drugs and other bad things.

But such systems are doomed to be overwhelmed and ineffective unless they accommodate the economic and social realities of one nation that has a need for labor and other nations where so many human beings are moved to flee poverty, violence and persecution and seek better lives for themselves and their children.

A modern nation needs to create, staff and pay for a system that offers legal, monitored immigration, temporary and permanent, for workers of all skill levels across all sectors of the economy.

Some will happily return to their homelands after a season in the fields or on the ski slopes. Others will stay, work, earn money, spend money, pay taxes, build houses, buy houses and put far more into the economy than they take out. As they always have.

Some of our politicians may be deprived of the opportunity to cosplay Border Patrol agents during a quick visit to the Rio Grande. But most of us would welcome being able to watch TV without seeing any more of that.

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OUR VIEW

By the Tribune Editorial Board

Abravanel Hall helped me find connection

After buying a home in Salt Lake City, having moved here to start work as a physician at a clinic downtown, one of my first purchases was a season ticket for the Utah Symphony.

I made a donation — in truth, so that I could get a seat on the left side, first tier, from which I had the optimal view of the keyboard for programs that featured a piano concerto. At the time, still paying back medical school debt, it was a significant investment. But one I have never regretted and the start of further



MELISA J. BENTLEY

support with invaluable returns.

Connection and music helped me survive the COVID pandemic, which was devastating for so many: people living alone and with a practice full of incredibly dear and vulnerable patients was unspeakably hard at times. I lost patients and felt powerless. My responsibility to these patients, to help them, heal them and protect them seemed limited without knowledge of a new deadly virus, or means to treat or prevent it. Life was dark.

With the development of vaccines, and with the greatest caution,

Abravanel Hall and the Utah Symphony returned to in-person concerts. Marvellous architectural and engineering work improved the airflow, while distancing the symphony from the audience. Masks were mandatory, as well as proof of vaccination. Individuals or "family groups" were seated far more than six feet apart. Performances were shortened, and concessions were canceled. There were no wind instruments, woodwinds or brass. Musicians and conductor Thierry Fischer were masked.

Photo by BENTLEY, BS