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Extra Credit Paper

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“Should the Bill of Rights Apply to Illegal Immigrants?”

The United States, as well as a few other countries around the world, are having trouble preventing illegal immigrants from entering their territories. The INS estimates that there are currently 12 million illegal immigrants living in the U.S. A more daunting fact is that these illegal immigrants have between 11.5 and 12.1 household members living with them in the U.S. (Pew Hispanic Center, [pewhispanic.org](http://pewhispanic.org)).

There are many problems associated with this issue. First, the U.S.-Canadian border is the largest of any two countries in the world. The U.S. Border Patrol does not have enough agents to cover the entire border and must rely on rotating Army National Guard soldiers and tips from the locals to catch illegal immigrants seeking entry. Second, relations between the U.S. and Canada have always been, and probably always will be, stable; however, home-grown terrorists recently caught have expressed their intent to cross the U.S.-Canadian border in order to carry out a terrorist plot. Therefore, the problem with the U.S.-Canadian border is not so much immigration; it is the threat of terrorism. Third, Mexico does not have a stable government, workers are exploited and underpaid, the police force is full of corruption as are many government officials, and the quality of life for the average person is not adequate. Not everyone has access to an education, proper medical care, clean water, or employment. The preceding issues are causing the widespread migration of millions of illegal immigrants into the United States. If the Bill of Rights applied to illegal immigrants,

it would only encourage many more to try and gain entry into the U.S. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the U.S. to not protect illegal immigrants with the Bill of Rights.

Applying the Bill of Rights to illegal immigrants would only ignite and encourage illegal immigrants to try and gain entry into the United States. The already booming business of illegal immigrant transportation would explode; making the already difficult task of controlling the U.S. border into an impossible job. To counter the influx of illegal immigrants, the states of California, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and Florida would have to dedicate a significant amount of their budget to protecting their borders. This would then require more federal funding to back-fill money being spent in this new problem. Ultimately, the result would be higher taxes across the U.S. which would not be well received. With so many immigrants rushing over the borders and settling generally where they do now, Americans might become upset with all of their new neighbors and move north away from the southern border. After all, these new neighbors do not have jobs, an education, or any means to purchase basic necessities like food and clothing. This would lead to widespread crime and thievery increasing the workload for the police and again increasing taxes.

As mentioned before, illegal immigrants who live in the U.S. have between 11.5 and 12.1 members per household. One of the biggest reasons why immigrants come to the U.S. is not necessarily an opportunity for themselves, rather for their children. These children require medical care and other services provided by state and federally-funded organizations. These are the same places that many poor, homeless, and immigrants with permission to be in the U.S. go when they have problems. It would be unethical and wrong to deprive those people access to the only form of care and service they can afford.

The Bill of Rights was intended to protect citizens of the U.S. and those living in the U.S. with permission. Some of these rights include: freedom of speech, press, religion, peaceable assembly, and to petition the government; protection from unreasonable search and seizure; self-incrimination, private property; trial by jury and other rights of the accused; prohibition of excessive bail, as well as cruel and unusual punishment; protection of rights not specifically enumerated in the Bill of Rights; and powers of states and people. These rights are conferred upon those who are born U.S. citizens, immigrants who have legally established residence in the U.S., and naturalized citizens of the U.S. Illegal immigrants should not be protected by the Bill of Rights because it will guarantee them certain rights that may slow their deportation or slow the trial of an immigrant suspected of committing a crime while inside the U.S.

Engraved on a tablet at the base of the Statue of Liberty reads the poem: "Give me your tired, your poor; Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free; The wretched refuse of your teeming shore; Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me; I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" These appropriate words were the first words most immigrants saw since its establishment in 1886. A lot has changed since then. America is not as safe as it once was and has enemies around the world that wish to do harm to its citizens. Granting protection to illegal immigrants would make it harder to control the borders and perform accurate searches, prosecute those who commit crimes and deport those discovered to be in the U.S. illegally, and ensure that the quality of life many enjoy in the U.S. does not decrease.

In conclusion, it is not in the best interest of the American people to allow the protection of illegal immigrants under the Bill of Rights. Illegal immigrants were not born in the U.S. and therefore the laws protecting the citizens of the U.S. do not apply.