

EDITORIAL

Real reason

Does Abbott oppose immigrants, or does he have ulterior motives?

For the past few weeks Gov. Greg Abbott has been transporting migrants from the Mexican border to Washington, D.C. His office even sends out news releases announcing each bus' arrival at our nation's capital. Abbott justified the move by saying that the accumulation of refugees seeking entry to this country is the result of bad federal policy, and thus the federal government can deal with them.

This is just one of several actions the governor has taken to further the anti-immigrant and anti-trade agenda of former President Donald Trump. As a border governor who obviously has seen the benefits of immigration and cross-border trade, it's fair to ask: Are his actions more about setting up a presidential bid under the guise of border security?

Abbott has long taken advantage of our state's position on the border to court favor from Trump, who made several visits to the Rio Grande Valley at Abbott's invitation to advocate for a border wall and stronger immigration controls. After Trump's defeat in the 2020 election, Abbott took up the border-security mantle, pledging to finish the wall and keep illegal entrants, drugs and other contraband out of this country.

Could the governor be positioning himself to be the next Trump — perhaps even his running mate if Trump decides to run again in 2024? It's generally assumed that former Vice President Mike Pence won't be on the ticket; Trump has criticized Pence heavily since he distanced himself from his former boss in the wake of the Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol.

If so, the bus trips actually could help him win favor from both sides of the political aisle, as it actually has turned out to be a good thing, notwithstanding its heavy drain on Texas taxpayers.

Busing migrants, mostly refugees, to Washington after they had been processed and released by federal immigration officials is just one activity Abbott began last month. He drew howls of protests after he ordered state troopers to stop and inspect every commercial truck coming from Mexico, even after they had passed through the federal screening process. The lengthy state inspections have cost the Texas and U.S. economy billions in economic losses as produce has rotted in the hot sun awaiting inspection, and led to food shortages and price increases for Texas families.

Interestingly, opposition to the migrant buses died quickly. Because the migrants already had been processed and released by federal officials, forcefully detaining them and busing them across state lines was tantamount to kidnapping. This forced Abbott's office to issue a clarification, saying that the trips were voluntary.

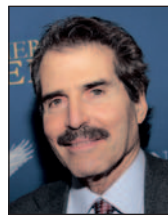
But volunteer they did. Migrants have welcomed the free ride to Washington, where they have been met with staff from many immigration and civil rights organizations that have offices at the capital. Those trained workers are helping to connect the immigrants with family members and sponsors, and inform them of how they can best work toward acquiring permanent legal residency.

If the stunt actually is a means to a political end, and if it succeeds, we can only hope that he uses a national position to work toward real, humane immigration reform.



Did you know that in some states, if you miss one tax payment, local politicians will take your home, sell it and keep all the profits?

JOHN STOSSEL



CREATORS SYNDICATE

Really. Tawanda Hall was behind on her taxes. She was on a payment plan but had missed \$900. She didn't expect Southfield, Michigan, to take her entire house because of that. It was worth \$286,000 more than what she owed.

"I'm still in shock," Hall says in my new video. "They took my whole house, my whole family's livelihood."

John Bursch, a lawyer for the county, says while this practice may sound unfair (yes, it sure does), "It's also unfair to force those who pay their taxes to subsidize those who don't."

"I pay taxes!" Hall responds. She works as a nursing assistant. "I lift people. I bathe people. I work hard."

When Hall found out she was going to lose her home, she tried to pay off the debt.

"I went to the mayor's office, I went down to the city county building," she says. "They didn't want our money. They said no."

They wanted her house. Taking it should be illegal. "I think it's unconstitutional," says

Christina Martin, senior attorney at the Pacific Legal Foundation. "The government can't take more than it's owed."

The Foundation is suing local governments in six states for this type of home theft.

Martin won one case in Michigan's supreme court. Oakland County had taken an entire home over an \$8 debt.

Matthew Hodges, the county's lawyer, argued, "There couldn't be anything more fair than informing property owners of what is going to happen, giving them time to act and then letting them make an informed choice."

Martin's response: "Do you think if he knew he owed \$8, he would have paid it? Of course! He didn't know, and there wasn't the proper incentive to let him know."

In fact, the town has an incentive *not* to let him know. Officials rarely tell people: "Pay! Or we'll take your home!" Towns that do this write notices in legalese: "a tax lien acquired under a certain Instrument of Taking from the Collector of Taxes for the city ... said instrument of Taking covers a certain parcel of land ..."

Hall doesn't remember receiving "anything other than, 'Get out.'"

Despite the Michigan Supreme Court ruling, a judge dismissed Hall's case because the government itself did not make the profit. In her case, the town gave her home to a private business. That business, the Southfield Neighborhood

Revitalization Initiative, sold the house and kept the money.

The business says it uses the town's donations to maintain attractive, safe neighborhoods, protect and raise property values.

"Government shouldn't be able to steal from its own people and then give it over to their friends," Martin says.

I ask her how she knows Southfield Neighborhood Revitalization officials are "friends" of the politicians.

She replies, "The company is literally run by the mayor and the city administrator!"

I wanted to interview them. Neither would agree to talk to me.

I'm surprised how common this kind of government home theft is. If you are behind on taxes, even just \$10 behind, 11 states allow local governments to sell your home and keep all its value.

In Massachusetts, a 66-year-old grandmother is "sleeping in her car right now," Martin says. "The city took her property, turned around and sold it within days of evicting her."

Although her debt was just \$30,000, they sold her house for \$242,000 and kept the difference.

The Pacific Legal Foundation has gotten three states to stop engaging in this home equity theft. Good.

Eleven more to go.

John Stossel is creator of Stossel TV and author of "Give Me a Break: How I Exposed Hucksters, Cheats, and Scam Artists and Became the Source of the Liberal Media."

Home theft

YOUR VOICES

We've lost our way

Editor:

Now in the state of Georgia, we learn that people who oversee the elections in that state are being harassed so much in their daily lives that they feel so endangered for their lives and their families, they are opting out of their offices and duties. Donald Trump is totally to blame for this by lying and name calling while he continues to enjoy an opulent lifestyle supporting Vladimir Putin of Russia!

What has happened to America and its values? I submit this all started during the Nixon years of influence. He is the one who courted the southern strategy of race baiting and dirty tricks. This phenomenon has grown in our political system to the point where money or lack of it is the most important thing, even over ideas for the good of our democracy.

God help us because we have totally lost our way.

Bill Williams Palmview

Unregulated THC is risky

Editor:

Under current laws, products that contain Delta 9/THC (at least over .03% concentration) are federally illegal across the nation. So why is it you can see signs advertising the sale of such product?

Under current regulations "hemp"-derived Delta 8 is legal for sale. Through extraction processes,

JOIN THE DEBATE

The Brownsville Herald welcomes letters. Letters must be signed and give the writer's address and daytime telephone number for verification. Letters of 200 words or fewer will be given preference. Letters may be edited for length, grammar and clarity. Letters may be mailed to The Herald at: 222 N. Exp. 77/83, Suite 176, Brownsville, TX 78520. Email us at letters@brownsvilleherald.com.

marijuana distributors are allowed to bring THC to the Texas market legally. But just because it's legal doesn't mean it's safe.

Delta 8 exists naturally within the plant, but it isn't a lot. To curb this, manufacturers use a multitude of different chemicals to synthetically convert other parts of the plant into Delta 8.

As legal marijuana is very new to the country, laws are currently very loose or nonexistent, which potentially could allow unsafe methods of extraction to be used. Although typically branded as THC/Delta9 diet, THC today has tripled in potency since 1994. While marijuana has historically been shown to not be habit-forming, this new uptick in potency means we cannot rely on past studies as the stronger the marijuana, the more likely one is to get addicted.

The PreventionResourceCenter, a program of Behavioral Health Solutions of South Texas, serves as the central data collection repository for Region 11. PRC wants to help inform the community about current substance use trends happening around them.

To find out more about the

prevention work being conducted in your community, download the latest Regional Needs Assessment at our website, www.prc11.org/data. If you are interested in becoming a part of this project and would like to learn more, please contact me at 787-7111 ext. 243, or Daniel Rodriguez, program coordinator, at 787-7111 ext. 238.

Jarod Munoz
PreventionResourceCenter
Region 11
Pharr

Faithful known by their actions

Editor:

A Christian is not defined by a title but by his actions, so no so-called educated "Christian" is not a Christian, nor is anyone calling themselves Christian who do not have Jesus Christ as their model (1 Peter: 2:21) It is one thing to claim to be Christian yet quite another to be a true Christian.

Gilberto Valle
Gatesville

Lead or leave

Editor:

Mr. President, Mrs. Vice President, lead, follow, or get the hell out of the way.

Before you, like LBJ, get us into a nuclear Holocaust with Russia and China.

Leo Puente
Palmview

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This newspaper is dedicated to giving our readers accurate, relevant and timely news and entertainment. We hope to provide local residents and leaders information that will help them make decisions that will benefit our community.