

## CLEARINGHOUSE

### Fear, bigotry color perceptions of immigrants

In the Dec. 21, 1983, Clearinghouse, four letters were printed ("Family should say 'thanks' for taxpayer support") that reflected many commonly held misconceptions about the impact of immigrants on our community.

The letter from A. Collins expresses the misguided anger of a taxpayer who feels that tax dollars are being wasted on undocumented residents.

The fact is the so-called "illegals" prop up such tax-supported institutions as the Social Security system and the Employment Development Department. They pay into both of these programs, yet are not eligible to receive the benefits.

All responsible studies have drawn the same conclusions: undocumented residents pay all the same taxes and collect on very few of the services that their tax dollars support.

They also create jobs by making industry profitable here in the U.S. so it doesn't flee to third world countries.

Mildred Cameron's letter is filled with fearful inaccuracy. Undocumented residents are not eligible for welfare, the family in question is not receiving government money for rent, and Mexicans do not have *pinatas* instead of Christmas trees. It is sad when the color of a person's skin and the location of their birth can stir such irrational, hateful bigotry.

The letter from Bette Perkins arouses sympathy for the homeless women in Orange County. [That is] a truly sad problem that the Orange County Human Relations Commission is trying to resolve. These homeless people do receive service from the county government, in the form of general relief and medical services.

The undocumented residents, on the other hand, are not eligible for most services.



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The welfare the family in Jesus Mena's excellent article (Dec. 11, "Poor family finds hope at Christmas") received was private

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money from caring people, not government money. But it clearly represents a very unusual case; most undocumented families don't receive help. They work hard, are law-abiding residents and in exchange, they are denied basic social services and hunted to be deported.

In response to Donna MacKay, a hard-working mother who has always paid taxes yet not collected the benefits, she should understand the situation of the so-called illegal aliens, for it is the same as hers.

I might point out that the majority of citizens' tax dollars go to pay for services they do use, but take for granted, such as streets, sewers, drainage systems, police, fire, probation and courts, to name a few.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate *The Register* for the insightful work of Jesus Mena, who has covered a large Orange County community that is largely misunderstood and too often ignored until a scapegoat is needed: the undocumented residents, the silent minority.

Rusty Kennedy  
Sarta Ana

*Kennedy is executive director of the Orange County Human Relations Commission. Staff writer Mena reconfirms that two of Carmen's nine children are American citizens and do receive \$400 a month in welfare benefits plus food stamp supplements.*