

Cost of Care

A Disabled Son Imperils Family's Immigration Hope

Igor's Parents Pay Medical Bills
But What If They Die?
Becoming 'Public Charge'

Learning to Love the Beatles

By MIRIAM JORDAN

MARTHA'S VINEYARD, Mass.—Zandro Souza, an immigrant from Brazil, rose in six years from being a restaurant dishwasher who barely spoke English to a successful chef in upscale restaurants here on Martha's Vineyard. Last year, after a long bureaucratic journey, Mr. Souza and his wife, Fernanda, were tantalizingly close to winning green cards that would let them remain in the U.S.

But during a final interview with a U.S. immigration official in Providence, R.I., the Souzas' five-year effort to win legal status hit a wall. "I have no problem approving you and your wife," Mr. Souza says the official told him. "But I need more information about your son."

The Souzas' 11-year-old son, Igor, is blind and developmentally delayed. His condition requires countless doctor visits, frequent runs to the emergency room and more than \$1,000 a month in medication. Mr. Souza says he has paid almost all of Igor's medical bills—about \$20,000 annually—out of pocket, without insurance or help from government programs. He feared accepting aid would jeopardize his family's attempt to gain permanent U.S. residency.

According to Mr. Souza, the immigration official told him that if Mr. Souza and his wife died, their son could be-

Kicked Out

Annual number of foreigners deported from the U.S.:



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security

come a "public charge." Although the family tried to prove that Igor would be cared for if his parents passed away, the U.S. government earlier this year denied green cards to the couple and their son and placed them in deportation proceedings. This time the government cited another reason for rejection—that they applied for and entered on tourist visas but intended to stay permanently.

"If this were only about me, I would throw in the towel" and return to Brazil, says Mr. Souza, 30 years old. "But I want the best for my son."

The Souzas' story shows how compassion can collide with hard-nosed financial considerations as the U.S. decides which immigrants should be admitted and which should be turned back. The Souzas rose through hard work and paying their own way. Yet they also hurt their case by entering the country on a false pretext, although many immigrants who later gain U.S. citizenship do the same.

Admitting productive, self-reliant people has long been a goal of U.S. immigration policy. The Immigration Act of 1891, one of the country's first efforts to regulate immigration, allowed the exclusion or deportation of any individual deemed to be a burden on the public purse, referring to "idiots, insane persons, paupers, or persons likely to become a public charge."

At Ellis Island, newcomers inspected by public-health officials and deemed unfit were returned to their country of origin. Steamship lines were often fined for having ferried them to the U.S. Later, legal immigrants from Mexico and Asia faced similar scrutiny on entering from the West.

A 1996 federal law says immigrants must be legal U.S. residents for five years before they qualify for Medicaid, which pays medical expenses for the poor. However illegal immigrants cannot be refused emergency medical care. Between 1921 and 1930, 10,703 foreigners were deported on public-charge

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grounds. In more recent years, the government has cited other more basic reasons for forcing someone to leave, such as having entered the country illegally.

In 2005, 75,532 foreigners were deported for entering the U.S. without proper documents or through fraud or misrepresentation. Public charge was the official reason for only 824 out of the total 208,521 deportations that year.

Illegal-immigrant children are entitled to attend public schools, and special-needs children receive the same services as other students. In recent years, however, the escalating cost of providing education to children with special needs has fueled clashes between advocates for disabled students and those concerned that they are draining already-limited school budgets.

In Massachusetts about 16.5% of the state's student population receives special education. The cost of educating these children is increasing faster than for mainstream students and placing a financial burden on many school districts, according to school administrators.

Shawn Saucier, a spokesman for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, says privacy laws prevent the agency from commenting on the Souzas' case. "However, if we were talking to a couple who had a son with disabilities, we would have to be satisfied that the child would not become a public charge," he says.

James R. Edwards Jr., an adjunct fellow with the Hudson Institute, a conservative Washington think tank, says the public-charge concept is rooted in this country's emphasis on self-sufficiency. "We aren't interested in taking foreign countries' criminals ... and certainly not those unable to support themselves," says Mr. Edwards, who favors restricting immigration.

As for the Souzas, he says, "My heart goes out to the family and the kid." However, he says, the U.S. already contends with "native-born Americans who face the same kind of crisis, with their children being ill and suffering disease."

Mr. Souza and his wife met as teenagers in 1990 in Cuparaque, a small Brazilian town. In 1994, Fernanda, then 17, became pregnant and the couple decided to marry.

Igor was born on March 1, 1995. At seven months, he was diagnosed with congenital toxoplasmosis, caused by a parasite that is present in uncooked meat and the fecal matter of cats. Transmission to the fetus can cause severe problems, including mental retardation, seizures, blindness, and even death. Doctors believe that Ms. Souza was infected by the cats in her grandmother's home, and Igor contracted the condition from his mother during pregnancy.

The couple soon realized that Igor's condition would require careful manage-

ment and virtually around-the-clock monitoring, not to mention a panoply of special drugs. The Souzas had access to free care through Brazil's vast public health-care network, but the large hospitals and long waiting lists were difficult to navigate. To get Igor to the doctor, Fernanda rose at 4 a.m., taking two buses to line up just to make an appointment for a month later. The family couldn't afford private care on Mr. Souza's \$300 a month salary working in a restaurant.

The Souzas saw an answer thousands of miles to the north, on Martha's Vineyard where Brazilian immigrants are the backbone of the local tourism industry. In 1989, Mr. Souza's father, José, found summer work in a restaurant called the Navigator, eventually settling here in 1997.

In 2000, Mr. Souza arrived in the U.S. on a six-month tourist visa. He joined his father at the restaurant, rising to become daytime chef. His hourly wage doubled to \$17. At night, he worked a second job up the street at the Harbor View Hotel's Coach House, one of Martha's Vineyard's finest restaurants. Mr. Souza moved swiftly from dishwasher to sauté cook to lead line cook, overseeing all the workstations in the kitchen. "He has a passion," says Jim Moore, the restaurant's food and beverage director, who took Mr. Souza to demonstrate his cooking—including his mini lobster rolls—at the upscale Tribeca Grill in New York City.

In early 2001, Mr. Souza brought his wife and son to the U.S. The two took an overnight van to Rio de Janeiro, where an official at the U.S. consulate issued

Public charge was the official reason for 824 out of the total 208,521 deportations in 2005.

them tourist visas.

Igor started kindergarten at the Oak Bluffs School, where he was assigned a special assistant, as well as occupational and physical therapy. About 400 students attend Oak Bluffs School, where Igor today is in the fifth grade. About 20% of them require special-education services. However, "only three or four have the level of need requiring a one-on-one assistant" such as Igor, says James Weiss, Martha's Vineyard school superintendent. Mr. Weiss estimates it costs more than \$40,000 to educate Igor annually compared with \$15,000 for "regular" students.

"He certainly is a youngster who impacts our budget in a significant way," says Dr. Weiss. However, "it's both our legal and moral obligation to help stu-



Fernanda and Zandro Souza (left) with their son, Igor, who is blind, in Boston.

dents who have identified needs."

As Igor mastered English, story time and music became his favorite classes. He began singing Beatles songs. A poem he wrote in Braille with the help of his teacher reads, "My favorite song is 'Yesterday.'" A lanky, curly-haired boy, Igor recently entertained teachers and classmates in the hallway with a rendition of "Hey Jude."

Initially, the family relied on friends to drive them to Boston for appointments with Blaise Bourgeois, a neurologist at Children's Hospital Boston. The consultations, every four or five months, cost the couple about \$350 each, which they paid out of pocket according to bills and receipts reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.

Igor also required a special dentist, nutritionist, endocrinologist and frequent visits to his pediatrician. Every three months or so, Igor suffered a seizure that landed the Souzas in the emergency room of the Martha's Vineyard Hospital. One of his worst episodes, Christmas Eve in 2003, lasted 45 minutes. The emergency-room visits have cost between \$1,500 and \$2,500 each. Mr. Souza says Igor's medical bills this year are about \$16,000; in previous years they have risen as high as \$20,000.

Mr. Souza says he pays for his son's doctor visits and prescription medication on the spot. Mr. Souza says he still owes \$4,000 to the hospital for emergency-care visits. "If I can't pay in one lump sum, I make sure and send a check in every month—even if it's just for \$100 or \$300," says Mr. Souza.

Mr. Souza, his wife and son live with Mr. Souza's parents and other relatives in a three-bedroom house owned by Mr. Souza's father. Mr. Souza earns \$5,000 to \$6,000 a month; about 27% of that is deducted in taxes from his weekly pay-

check. He contributes \$600 a month to his parents' mortgage.

In 2001, Mr. Souza sought to take advantage of a temporary immigration law, known as Section 245i, to apply for an employer-sponsored green card for himself and his family. The bill allowed immigrants to adjust their status from within the U.S., even if they had overstayed their visas or entered the country illegally. Employers regarded the program as an opportunity to legalize their work force, while critics said it was tantamount to amnesty.

Alan Counsell, then manager of the Navigator restaurant, had previously agreed to sponsor Mr. Souza's father and mother. He agreed to sponsor the Souza family as well. "It was a small repayment" for their dedication, he says. "Anything I asked of them they gave me."

Mr. Counsell followed the requirement to place advertisements in the newspaper, to show that qualified chefs—like Mr. Souza—weren't readily available on the Vineyard. Mr. Souza paid for the ads—and over the next few years paid almost \$10,000 in fees to lawyers and the U.S. government.

In July 2003, the Souzas received notification that their employment authorization was being processed. Mr. Souza was thriving professionally, earning a reputation as a fine seafood cook and collecting employee awards. He acquired hundreds of cookbooks, which he says helped him improve his English. His favorite chef is the well-known New York restaurateur Mario Batali, whose picture on the cover of a 2002 edition of *Gourmet Magazine* Mr. Souza pinned to a wall.

Mr. Souza's son, who shares a bedroom with his parents, refuses to go to sleep before his father arrives home from work each night. On Mondays, Mr. Sou-

za's only day off, the father picks up his son from school and treats him to pizza. On Sundays, the family dresses up for evening services at the local Brazilian evangelical church, where Igor sways and chants spiritual songs.

In 2004, the Souza family was fingerprinted and issued Social Security numbers and work permits, "I felt like the gates to freedom were opening," recalls Mr. Souza. "The only thing missing was the interview." The family was summoned to Providence for an 8 a.m. interview on May 13, 2005, the final step in the process.

Mr. Souza was nervous but hopeful. He and his wife took an oath to tell the truth, he recalls. They began answering questions from the adjudicator. Among them was the question of why the family had come to the U.S. Mr. and Mrs. Souza told the official that they had come here to make a better life.

As Igor squirmed in his chair and babbled in Portuguese, the immigration adjudicator turned to Mr. Souza and asked whether he relied on the U.S. government for the child's care. Mr. Souza answered without hesitation: "No."

Mr. Souza recalls the adjudicator then asking: "So you pay for his schooling?"

Mr. Souza answered hastily—failing to explain that while his son attended public school, he paid for Igor's health care himself.

Then the immigration official voiced concern that the son would become a public charge if his parents passed away, Mr. Souza recalls. The Souzas left the room clutching a form letter with Igor's name filled in at the top. In the space next to 5, "PLEASE SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING," the official had written: "I-864 from your father Zandro Souza showing evidence you will not become a public charge." They had 12 weeks to supply the documentation.

"I can't even remember driving home," says Mr. Souza.

According to U.S. immigration policy, an applicant can overcome a public-charge inadmissibility issue by providing sufficient evidence that he or she is unlikely to become a public charge. This evidence can be a posted as a bond, an "affidavit of support" from friends or family, personal funds, or an offer of employment.

The Souzas set out to prove that, in the event of a tragedy, Igor would be cared for by their family, not the government. Mr. Souza sent evidence that his father's house on Martha's Vineyard—bought for \$265,000 several years earlier and now worth about \$500,000—could be put in a trust in Igor's name if his parents died. It could then be sold, if necessary, to cover his health expenses. Some immigration attorneys question why the government requested an affidavit of support in the Souzas' case, because the family was being sponsored by an employer who already serves as a financial guarantor.

But this soon became a moot point. In January 2006, immigration authorities denied green cards to each member of the Souza family and ordered them to appear in court for deportation proceedings. The government was no longer raising the "public charge" issue. Rather, the government notice stated that Mr. Souza, his wife and Igor had come to the U.S. on six-month tourist visas in violation of U.S. law because their actual intention was to stay in the U.S. for good.

"I felt an empty feeling, like everything had been in vain," recalls Mr. Souza.

Mr. Saucier, the spokesman for immigration, says: "We don't look for one reason and deny the case. We issue it for all reasons applicable to the application."

While they wait for their deportation hearing in February, Mr. Souza continues to pay for Igor's health care. Early this month, the family paid \$643.98 for two antiseizure drugs, according to receipts reviewed by the Journal.

Mr. Souza says that if his family receives their green cards, he will continue to pay for his son's medical costs. As new legal residents, the Souzas won't qualify for Medicaid for five years under current immigration law. And Mr. Souza's current income level already puts the family well above the poverty limit for Medicaid.

That's why Mr. Souza says he wants to cook for a larger restaurant or one owned by a chain. Those restaurants, he notes, offer health insurance.

WSJ.com Online Today: See video of Zandro Souza and other immigrants speaking at a Thanksgiving luncheon hosted by Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy coalition, at WSJ.com/OnlineToday.

Cardinal Health Inc.

Firm Settles for \$10 Million Over Inquiry by New York State

Cardinal Health Inc. agreed to pay \$10 million to settle an investigation by the New York state attorney general's office into the trading of pharmaceuticals on the secondary market. The probe determined that the Dublin, Ohio, provider of health-care products and services bought drugs from certain alternate-source vendors, which carries the risk of fake drugs or illicit knock-offs entering mainstream channels. Under the settlement, Cardinal will adopt new policies for its wholesale business and pay \$7 million to Health Research Inc., a New York not-for-profit corporation affiliated with the state's health department, as well as an additional \$3 million to the state of New York. Cardinal said in May that it was ending the sale and purchase of drugs on the secondary market.



Photos: Michael Justice

In Tony Monterey County, Slums and a Land War

Environmentalists fight to preserve scenic beauty while immigrants cram into houses and garages

Who will pick the vegetables?

By MIRIAM JORDAN

MONTEREY COUNTY IS MARKED by dramatic craggy cliffs that drop to the Pacific Ocean. Along the coast sit the manicured, affluent enclaves of Carmel, Pebble Beach and Monterey, which attract wealthy

homeowners and tourists from around the world.

About 20 miles inland, in the same county, is the fertile valley of Salinas, America's vegetable garden. Some 80% of the nation's lettuce and much of its broccoli, cauliflower and spinach grow in Salinas's fog-cooled fields, which produce \$3.5 billion worth of crops annually. "We have the climate and soils that make us one of the most bountiful areas in the world," says Bob Roach, the county's assistant agricultural commissioner.

Yet amid this land of plenty, there is squalor. Virtually beside the fields, in the city of Salinas, neighborhoods rival high-rise-jammed cities in population density. Multiple families occupy small houses; others live in converted garages. Gang graffiti mars the façades of apartment complexes. A school's walls are riddled with bullet holes. Fueling Salinas's troubles, many say, is a housing market that offers few affordable dwellings for the thousands of Hispanic immigrants who pick the area's crops.

The five-member family of Gabriela Alvarado, for example, has shared a tiny two-bedroom rented house with two fieldworkers. "It's the only way we can afford to live here," says Mrs. Alvarado, whose husband

Salinas, Calif.



Janice O'Brien (top), an environmentalist who opposes development in Monterey County, Calif., outside her Pebble Beach home. (Above) A crowded Salinas neighborhood, home to many immigrants.

came to Salinas 18 years ago to work in the lettuce fields. The Alvarados charged two fieldworkers \$150 a month each to board with them.

In a study of agriculture workers published in December, researchers from the University of California, Berkeley reported that 39% of homes in the Salinas area had more than 1.5 people per room, compared with 0.5% of all U.S. homes.

Monterey County is torn by competing priorities. On one side are farmers, developers and immigrant advocates, who want to see more housing built. On the other are environmentalists and residents, including those in the upscale coastal towns, who want to preserve open space and their quality of life. As the two camps fail to reach a middle ground, low-income immigrants have

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In Tony Monterey, a Fight Over Land Leaves Immigrants Crammed Into Housing

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borne most of the fallout: limited housing, with sky-high prices.

The stalemate has helped create housing prices in Salinas, a city of 150,000, that are out of sight, even by California standards. Last year, Salinas was the least-affordable place in the country to live, based on the percentage of median income required to make the mortgage on a median-priced house, according to Moody's Economy.com. The median resale price of a single-family home in Salinas was \$620,000 in June 2006, compared with \$175,750 the same month in 1996, according to DataQuick Information Systems. City manager Dave Mora says that Salinas's 19 square miles are "99% built out."

Monterey County's unusual combination of prime agricultural land and stunning coastal property, of great wealth abutting great poverty, make it an extreme example of how land-use questions can turn political. The clash here provides a glimpse of what may be faced by other

John Steinbeck, who grew up in Salinas, rhapsodized about the beauty of the Salinas Valley in his book "East of Eden," published in 1952, describing its "light gay mountains full of sun and loveliness" and streams that "slipped out of the hill canyons and fell into the bed of the Salinas River." He wrote about the valley's fertile soil and foothills carpeted with flowers.

IN THE 1950S and 1960s, farmers brought thousands of Mexican laborers to the U.S. as part of the government's *bracero* program. Farmers housed the mostly male workforce in dormitories on the edge of their land. By the 1970s, few farm owners offered housing because in most cases, they weren't obligated by law to provide it.

As the agricultural industry in Salinas flourished, the number of immigrants surged. At the same time, the area's beauty was becoming a draw to

big-money interests is "we need affordable housing," says Jan Mitchell, who formed two groups to fight developers. "But they never provide affordable housing; they will build estates."

By 1998, slow-growth advocates joined forces to form a group called LandWatch Monterey County. The group has been funded by individuals and foundations, including the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. "What we are trying to do is prevent the Salinas Valley from turning into another Los Angeles County or Silicon Valley," says Chris Fitz, executive director of LandWatch.

Janice O'Brien, a LandWatch supporter, lives in a fan-shell-shaped house in Pebble Beach, designed by a student of Frank Lloyd Wright. Her solar-powered home sits atop dunes on a well-known scenic route. Mrs. O'Brien moved here in 1973 from southern California, when many people, especially from Los Angeles, began to seek greener, calmer pastures in the Central Coast. She describes herself as a "liberal Democrat and ardent environmentalist."

"Why don't we live within the resources that make the peninsula beautiful?" she says. "That is our battle cry. Stay within the resources."

Mrs. O'Brien says that because of the influx of people working in the tourist trade in her area, traffic "has begun to look like Los Angeles at 5 p.m.," when many workers drive home.

Critics say that slow-growth advocates often live in coastal towns or ranch areas, surrounded by nature and isolated from the problems of overcrowding. "There are people who came here 20 years ago, found Utopia and don't want anything to change," says Jerry Smith, chairman of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors and a fourth-generation native of Monterey. "I'm passionate about my ocean sanctuary, rolling hills and farmland, but I really believe we need to build housing."

Other longtime residents, most of whom have seen their property values rise, want to fend off developers who they fear will suburbanize the area. "Nobody wants to give up this way of life," says Carol Harrington, who has lived in the Salinas area since her youth. Wild turkeys, wild pigs and deer roam on her 16 acres. She thinks housing for immigrant workers "should be provided by the farmers."

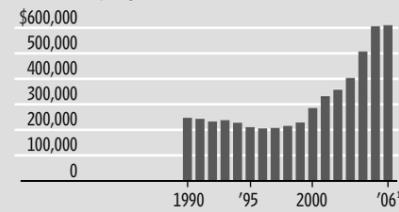
In 1999, another nonprofit group, called Common Ground, was formed to oppose LandWatch; its supporters included agriculture interests, the tourism industry and immigrant advocates.

Farmers in Salinas say they have been stewards of the land long before environmentalists arrived, and should have the flexibility to develop it as they see fit. "The threat to agriculture is not that we'll sell land," says Rod Braga, whose grandfather started farming here 80 years ago and who employs about 1,200 immigrants during peak season.

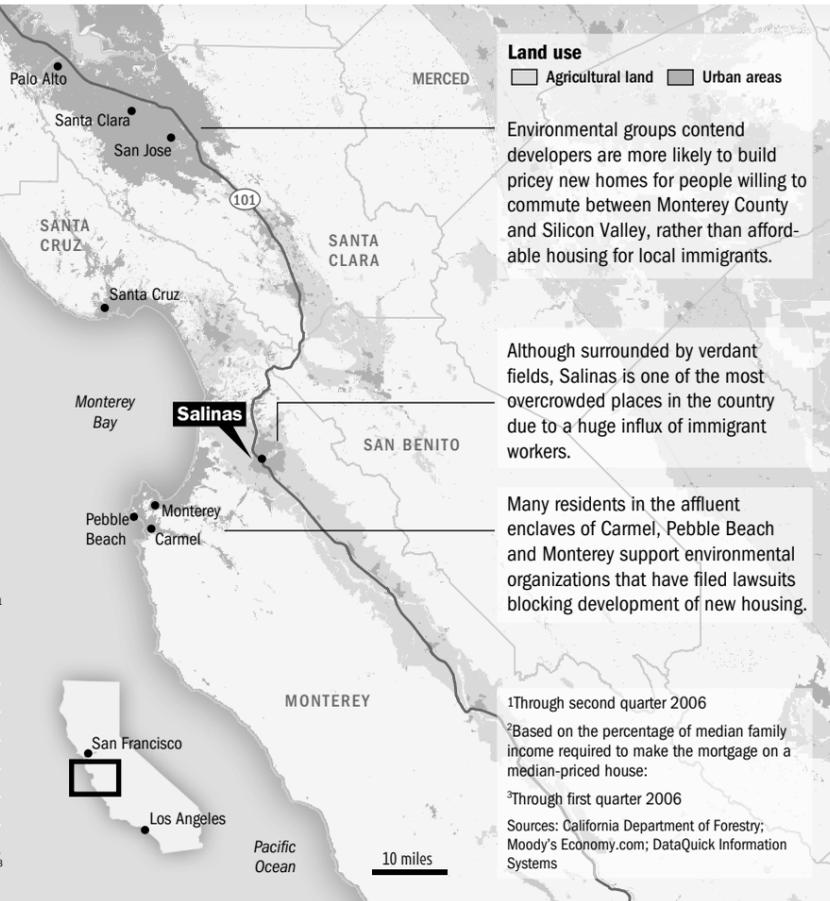
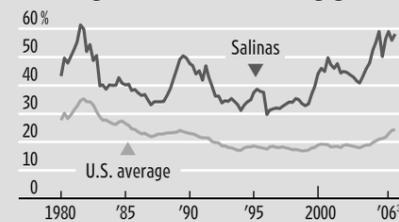
The Politics of Land Use

California's Monterey County boasts breathtaking scenery and terrible squalor. Immigrants, who are crucial to the area's agriculture and its hospitality industry, can't find affordable housing. Local farmers want to sell off some of their land to developers. Environmentalists are concerned this would spoil the area's scenery and wouldn't benefit those who need it.

Median resale price for single-family homes in Salinas, adjusted for inflation



Percentage of income used for mortgage²



Michael Justice

Carol Harrington outside her Salinas, Calif., home.

areas and industries that increasingly rely on low-wage immigrant laborers, without enough places to house them.

The fight is also emblematic of "slow-growth" movements across the country. From California to Vermont, residents are rebelling against plans they worry will trigger sprawl, rejecting the notion that what's good for the economy is good for them. Many want to maintain the small-town character of their communities, or preserve historic sites or the environment.

Some of the agriculture workers in Monterey are undocumented immigrants, and many move with the harvests, traveling from Arizona to California to the Northwest. But increasingly, there is work year-round in Salinas. Technology has allowed more crop rotations throughout the year, fresh-vegetable processing plants have opened and wineries have sprung up.

the wealthy and to tourists. Environmental groups increasingly kept a watchful eye over Monterey's land and its marine life.

The pristine look of the area is key to the county's \$1.6 billion tourism industry. In Carmel-by-the-Sea, where Clint Eastwood was once mayor, neon signs, billboards and food stands are banned. A round of golf at the famed Pebble Beach Golf Links is \$450 per person.

In the 1980s, more developers started to arrive. Grassroots groups began forming to oppose new housing projects, citing concerns about sprawl, water supplies and road congestion. In the 1990s, the groups began filing lawsuits, which stalled several developments. Still, amid the dot-com boom, Silicon Valley workers began buying homes in the area, even though it meant a long commute. "The mantra of

bedrooms to a pair of field-workers.

The housing crunch is even driving higher-income workers away, employers say. Don Nucci, co-chairman of Mann Packing Co., a vegetable packer and shipper, says his company recently lost five supervisors, discouraged by the area's home prices and gang problems. John D'Arrigo, whose grandfather started farming here in 1923, says his agribusiness lost two high-tech experts in three months. "It's happening all over town," he says. "People are leaving this area, from low-skilled workers all the way up to people making \$100,000 a year."

IF MORE LAND is allowed to be developed for housing, the big question is whether that would help the immigrant population. The pro-growth camp says it will, because every new project is required to include a certain number of "workforce" housing units, which are intended for lower- to moderate-income workers.

The slow-growth camp contends most development will be for expensive homes—and even the units designated for lower-income workers will be out of reach for most immigrant laborers, who earn as little as \$14,000 a year.

Construction of 853 houses—in the only single-family development now going up in Salinas—was delayed three years by challenges from another slow-growth group called Citizens for Responsible Growth, which raised concerns about the impact on traffic, schools and open space. Most of those houses cost between \$500,000 and \$800,00. Under current city rules, 12% must be set aside for moderate- to low-income families; those houses cost more than \$200,000.

"Families will do whatever they can to get into a house," says Mr. Mora, the Salinas city manager. "You need to have two or three families in a house." Some low-income home buyers take out interest-only mortgages, or benefit from special financing from nonprofit or government groups.

The latest battle over competing visions for Monterey County is evident in the struggle to revise a 20-year growth plan. The plan has been a work-in-

progress for six years and has already cost taxpayers more than \$6 million.

The first draft of the plan satisfied the slow-growth camp, but infuriated farmers, housing advocates and the tourism industry. Development of 75% of county land was blocked, either because it was deemed ecologically sensitive or too far from infrastructure. Latino community leaders accused slow-growth groups of being "environmental racists," who wanted to deprive Hispanics of achieving home ownership.

Last October, LandWatch, the slow-growth group, unveiled its own plan. Under that plan, many decisions—including approval for certain housing projects—would be decided by voters rather than elected or appointed officials. Development would be restricted to five already-urbanized areas. The plan calls for new projects to set aside at least 30% of units for low-income families.

Immigrant advocates say the LandWatch initiative would allow the heavily white populations of Carmel, Pebble Beach and Monterey, which often have higher voter turnout, to veto growth plans in Salinas Valley communities, which are home to mainly working-class Hispanics.

"Their plan basically says [to immigrants] that you can work in our restaurants, hotels and golf courses," says Alfred Diaz-Infante, president of a nonprofit home developer called Chispa. "But go home to your crowded conditions in Salinas at the end of the day."

LandWatch hoped to put its plan on the ballot in November, but the plan is tied up in San Francisco federal court. The court will decide whether a petition to qualify an initiative for the ballot complies with the Voting Rights Act if it was circulated only in English despite the fact that the area has many Spanish speakers.

Monterey County is advancing with its fourth draft of the general plan, which it hopes to adopt within months.

Meanwhile, the Alvarados, who came to Salinas in 1989 to pick lettuce, have had enough. They recently moved to Pasco, Wash., where they hope to seek work in the fields and be able to buy a home. "It got too expensive in Salinas," Mrs. Alvarado says.

A retirement plan is hope.

Hope, however, is in no way a retirement plan.

In Immigrant Fight, Grass-Roots Groups Boost Their Clout

Internet, Talk Radio Are Used To Affect State, City Laws; Critics Slam 'Hate Groups'

Mr. Turner vs. Home Depot

By **MIRIAM JORDAN**

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif.—Armed with a computer and less than \$100, Joseph Turner two years ago formed a group called "Save Our State." His goal: save California from turning into a "Third World cesspool" of illegal immigrants, he says. The group doesn't have a formal membership, and Mr. Turner counts barely 2,000 people on his email list and message board.



Joseph Turner

Yet this meager base has proved to be a powerful springboard. Through his Web site, Mr. Turner has recruited supporters to hold confrontational protests outside Home Depot stores, where unauthorized workers often gather to seek jobs. He has also helped ignite a nationwide movement by local governments to crack down on illegal immigration. So far, about 10 towns have passed ordinances to drive out undocumented immigrants after getting the idea from Mr. Turner. Dozens of other towns are considering such measures.

"My idea of activism is aggressive, street-level and in-your-face activism," says Mr. Turner, who strikes a clean-cut look with slicked-back black hair and icy blue eyes. He adds: "I don't believe in turning the other cheek."

Mr. Turner is part of an anti-immigrant brushfire that is gathering force at the grass-roots level around the U.S. Small groups like Mr. Turner's Save Our State are cropping up from coast to coast, recruiting members and devising tactics to tackle illegal immigration in their communities. Critics call many of these groups racist, a charge organizers deny. What no one disputes is that they are tapping into widespread frustration over the federal government's failure to adopt a national immigration policy while a deeply divided Congress clashes over how to deal with 12 million illegal immigrants.

The Center for New Community, a Chicago organization that tracks immigration issues, says there are 211 so-called nativist groups—groups that advocate protecting the interests of native inhabitants against those of immigrants—across the U.S., up from 37 two years ago. The Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks extremist groups, also says nativist groups are on the rise and that several are hate groups, including Mr. Turner's Save Our State. The law center defines a hate group as one that singles out and promotes hatred of another group, based on ethnicity, language, religion, sexual inclination or immigration status. Mr. Turner denies he

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New Backlash: In Immigrant Fight, Grass-Roots Groups Boost Their Clout

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runs a hate group.

These grass-roots organizations are having an impact. In North Carolina, state legislators say the fierce opposition of one anti-illegal immigration group torpedoed a bill proposed last year that would have allowed undocumented students who graduate from state high schools to pay in-state college tuition. In Georgia, another group's mobilization efforts were crucial to passing a bill last spring to curb illegal immigration. In Arizona, a group called Protect Our City is pushing for local officials, including police officers, to help federal authorities enforce immigration laws within Phoenix.

The groups are often one-man shows, steered by tech-savvy leaders who creatively use the Web to mobilize support for immigration protests, boycotts, legislation and media coverage in their areas. Their influence is amplified as they find each other online and coordinate their efforts. Save Our State has occasionally joined forces with a North Carolina group as well as the volunteer group Minuteman Project, which patrols the border with the goal of stopping illegal immigrants from entering U.S. soil.

Several budding groups receive funding from older, well-endowed national organizations, such as the Federation for American Immigration Reform, which has been battling immigration for decades. Ron Woodard, head of NC Listen, a North Carolina group, says he improved his public-speaking skills in courses sponsored by FAIR. The Washington, D.C.-based national group, which advocates curbing legal immigration as well as stopping illegal entries to the U.S., also provided his group with "minor" financial support, he says.

Striking a Chord

These groups often strike a chord in small towns and areas where Hispanics are relative newcomers. Immigrants are increasingly bypassing traditional Hispanic centers in big cities, California and the southwest. Instead, they're settling in smaller, homogeneous towns and in Middle America, where many residents are still unaccustomed to them and fear that wages are being undercut by immigrants taking blue-collar jobs in their community.

"The financial costs to Georgia taxpayers of supplying [bilingual] education, incarceration, medical care and social benefits to the hundreds of thousands of people who are here in violation of our laws is becoming impossible to ignore," declared one Web site run by a Georgia grass-roots group, the Dustin Inman Society. "Someone please point to a case of wages in Georgia having gone up because of illegal immigration!"

Anti-immigrant sentiment has swept the U.S. before, targeting Irish, Italian, Jewish, Chinese and Japanese newcomers. In response to public outcry against the influx of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe after World War I, Congress passed the Quota Act of 1921

and then the even more restrictive Immigration Act of 1924. These days, hostility is directed at Spanish-speaking immigrants, especially illegal immigrants who are decry as a burden on taxpayers and a threat to national security.

William Gheen, a former conservative campaign strategist and legislative assistant, formed the Americans for Legal Immigration-PAC, or ALIPAC, on Sept. 11, 2004, the anniversary of the terrorist attacks. Hispanic illegal immigrants aren't blowing up skyscrapers, "but they steal American jobs, depress American wages and can wreck American lives," Mr. Gheen says. "They're the enemies in our streets." He says his group, run from his home in Raleigh, N.C., boasts supporters from all 50 states and has raised \$40,000 so far this year. "Most contributions come from concerned individuals, checks for \$25 to \$50," Mr. Gheen says.

The money comes from people like Lisa Mercier, a Hartselle, Ala., homemaker and devout southern Baptist who says the issue piqued her interest when Latino gangs moved into her former neighborhood on the outskirts of Washington, D.C. "With terrorism the way it is, we can't have our border wide open," she says, adding: "All the poor would like to come here."

Last year, four North Carolina lawmakers introduced a bipartisan bill that would entitle undocumented students who graduate from North Carolina high schools to attend universities paying in-state tuition. Mr. Gheen mounted an opposition campaign on the Web, lobbied in the halls of the state legislature and spread his message on a conservative radio talk show.

Several state legislators who signed the bill subsequently asked to remove their names from it. The bill never moved out of committee.

"This little organization got it on talk radio and created a firestorm," says North Carolina State Representative Paul Luebke, a Democrat and a primary sponsor of the bill. "Right-wing talk radio amplified the message. They hammered away on it incessantly. This enraged large numbers of people."

Mr. Luebke also says Mr. Gheen preyed on the discomfort felt by many white North Carolinians over the increased visibility of Latinos—the spread of Mexican restaurants and stores, Spanish-language signs and Spanish-language movies at video stores. With manufacturing jobs also moving overseas, "the brown immigrant was an easy scapegoat," says Mr. Luebke.

Mr. Gheen says his is a "moderate group" and denies trying to stir up racial animosities.

In Marietta, Ga., the local grass-roots group is the Dustin Inman Society, named for a teenage boy killed several years ago in a car accident that allegedly involved an illegal immigrant. The group is led by D. A. King, a 54-year-old former

Marine who sports a close-cropped haircut and says he was snubbed by Mexicans who moved into a house in his neighborhood in the 1990s. He says he grew even more frustrated when local and immigration officials ignored his calls to take action against the house, which he believed was overcrowded with illegal immigrants.

Mr. King shuttered his insurance business of 20 years in 2003 to devote himself full-time to educating Georgians about the adverse impact of illegal immigration, organize rallies around the issue and work the halls of the Georgia state legislature.

The crowning of his efforts was the passage in April of the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act, a state bill chockablock with provisions to stop illegal immigration that will begin to go into effect in July 2007. "We were sliding down a slippery slope on the way to 'Georgiifornia,'" says Mr. King, referring to California, which is often used as the poster child of excessive Latino immigration.

Effective Weapon

A key proponent of the immigration bill, his single most effective weapon was organizing protests at the Capitol "for the media and state governments to see," says Mr. King. He also praised the bill on radio and in newspaper columns. "I made it impossible for politicians to ignore the issue," he says.

Republican State Senator Chip Rogers, who wrote the Georgia bill, says Mr. King was "instrumental in ensuring people interested in illegal immigration were aware of the bill. He sent lots of email, went on radio often and wrote in local papers about it. He touched just about every potential media outlet."

In the network of anti-illegal immigrant activists, few have risen higher or faster than Joseph Turner. He still relishes a moment 12 years ago, when he took the stage at his half-Hispanic high school in working-class Riverside, Calif., to endorse a controversial ballot initiative to ban illegal immigrants from receiving state benefits. The senior drew such a heated response that he was sequestered in a gym afterward until tempers were calmed.

"I believe in the superiority of America and American culture," he says. If the federal government isn't doing its job, he says, direct democracy should provide solutions. He calls for deporting all illegal immigrants, saying, "the net benefit of illegal aliens is negative."

Mr. Turner grew up in Southern California's so-called Smog Belt, which includes San Bernardino and other working-class towns. His biological father, an alcoholic, walked out of his life when he was about eight years old, he says. His mother remarried a Mexican-American, whom Mr. Turner considers his fa-

Cold Reception

Activist groups focused on illegal immigration are proliferating as more undocumented people settle in the U.S.

Estimated number of undocumented immigrants in the U.S., in millions:



Estimated number of groups that focus on illegal immigration in the U.S.:



Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics; Census Bureau; Pew Hispanic Center; The Center for New Community

ther. He heard a lot of Spanish growing up. Mr. Turner says his mother was a drug addict who spent time incarcerated, and describes his stepfather as a "former gang banger" who abused drugs and was imprisoned. Both have since been rehabilitated, he says. Mr. Turner's mother, Janice Aguayo, confirms his account.

Incensed by the outcry of civil-rights and Hispanic groups against roundups of undocumented immigrants by U.S. authorities in southern California in 2004, Mr. Turner started his own group to battle illegal immigration, Save Our State. His first target was Home Depot, where immi-

grants often wait for homeowners seeking an extra hand at gardening or painting.

"With as little as five people you can shut down a day-laborer center," says Mr. Turner, because employers will be too intimidated to stop and hire them. Contractors have been deterred from hiring from these sites during the protests and in several days that followed. Home Depot declines to comment on Mr. Turner.

At a rally outside the day-laborer center in the ritzy coastal town of Laguna Beach, neo-Nazis and white supremacists waved Nazi and confederate flags. Mr. Turner says they weren't welcome at the event but that he couldn't stop them and that Save our State members left shortly after they arrived. Mr. Turner says he also deletes white-supremacist rhetoric when it pops up on his Web site's message board.

About a year ago, Mr. Turner drafted a three-page ordinance—the "City of San Bernardino Illegal Immigrant Relief Act." Although it was derailed before it could come to a citywide vote, the ordinance went on to be imitated, and passed, by several towns and cities across the country.

The law as proposed in San Bernardino would have revoked the license of any business deemed to aid or abet illegal immigrants, even unknowingly. It also would have banned landlords from renting to an illegal immigrant, and required that all rental agreements be filed with the city for verification. One provision would have prohibited the city from conducting business in any language other than English.

Over four months, Mr. Turner spent evenings and weekends gathering signatures outside grocery stores and knocking on doors in the more-affluent northern end of San Bernardino. As fear spread in Hispanic-heavy communities, the Archbishop of San Bernardino called an emergency meeting of all parish priests and dioceses

to discuss how to counter the measure. Community leaders, interfaith groups and town officials gathered soon afterward. "We wanted to portray this as a human issue, not a political or religious issue," says Auxiliary Bishop Rutilio del Riego.

Before the ordinance could go to a citywide vote, a judge ruled that Mr. Turner hadn't collected enough signatures and granted him 10 days to make up the difference, or nearly twice the original number of signatures. Concluding he couldn't achieve that, Mr. Turner let his hometown effort die.

But over the next few weeks, it sprang back to life—in the form of copycat initiatives taken up in small towns across the country, including Valley Park, Mo., Riverside, N.J., and Hazleton, Pa. Hazleton Mayor Louis Barletta was searching for ways to crack down on illegal immigration when he found Mr. Turner's petition on the Internet, though he says he isn't familiar with the views of Mr. Turner or his group. Hazleton now prohibits anyone from renting to or hiring illegal immigrants, and has made English the town's official language. Civil-rights groups are challenging the legislation in court.

Mr. Turner, who has a young son with his girlfriend, recently decided to run for the local San Bernardino school board. He says that he plans to challenge the Supreme Court ruling that allowed all children living in the U.S. to attend school, regardless of their immigration status. He also works as a field representative for Republican state assemblyman Ray Haynes, who represents a district on the Mexico-California border about an hour's drive from San Bernardino.

Mr. Haynes says he doesn't agree with all of Mr. Turner's views and rhetoric but admires his work ethic and energy. "He's on fire," says Mr. Haynes.

Dunn Suggests She Was Unaware of Probe Tactics

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probe. Ms. Dunn said she made special efforts to ascertain the tactic's legality, before referring it to Mr. Hurd for "the final decision."

Mr. Hurd said he approved the content of the message, but doesn't recall whether he knew the misinformation plot involved the use of tracer software that could show where the email was forwarded.

Mr. DeLia has been issued a subpoena by the House committee to appear at the hearing. He and his attorney haven't responded to requests for comment.

The House committee has requested testimony from Ms. Dunn, Mr. Hurd and several other H-P officials involved in the probe, as well as the company's outside counsel, Larry Sonsini. The House also issued subpoenas to five additional wit-

nesses who may have been involved in surreptitiously obtaining telephone numbers, a person close to the investigation said yesterday. The five witnesses are believed to be subcontractors to Action Research Group, a Florida contractor believed to have been involved in accessing telephone records.

One of the persons suspected of obtaining phone records, Bryan Wagner, of Littleton, Colo., said in an interview yesterday that he didn't know if he obtained any phone records in connection with the H-P leak probe because his employer-Action Research Group never identified its clients.

"They do not provide me any details on anything," he said. "I pretty much always assume that I am looking for people who have taken cars and aren't paying." He added that he believed most of the clients are "bounty hunters and bondsmen."

Mr. Wagner said he hadn't yet decided if he will answer questions before the House committee, but will appear. He also declined to comment about an article in The Wall Street Journal yesterday that he had told an investigator in Denver last week that he had destroyed his computer with a hammer and discarded it after learning that he might get caught up in the investigation of the H-P leak case.

"I just don't have my computer anymore," he said, declining to answer any questions about it.

WSJ.com Online Today: See the text of prepared testimony of H-P Chairman and CEO Mark Hurd and former Chairman Patricia Dunn, at [WSJ.com/OnlineToday](http://www.wsj.com/OnlineToday). Plus, WSJ.com's Peter Lattman blogs from the H-P congressional hearings, at <http://blogs.wsj.com/law/>.

Heavy Load

Port-Security Plan, A Bid to Foil Terror, May Slow Deliveries

ID Program Could Thin Ranks Of Low-Wage Truckers; Many Are in U.S. Illegally

Mr. Rivera's 15-Hour Day

By MIRIAM JORDAN

LONG BEACH, Calif.—Rafael Rivera spends more than a dozen hours a day in the cab of his old blue truck. In a typical day spent hauling shipping containers from the Port of Long Beach to distribution centers for companies such as Ikea, Pier 1 Imports or Toyota, the El Salvadoran immigrant clears about \$8 an hour.

Mr. Rivera's humble but critical job



Rafael Rivera

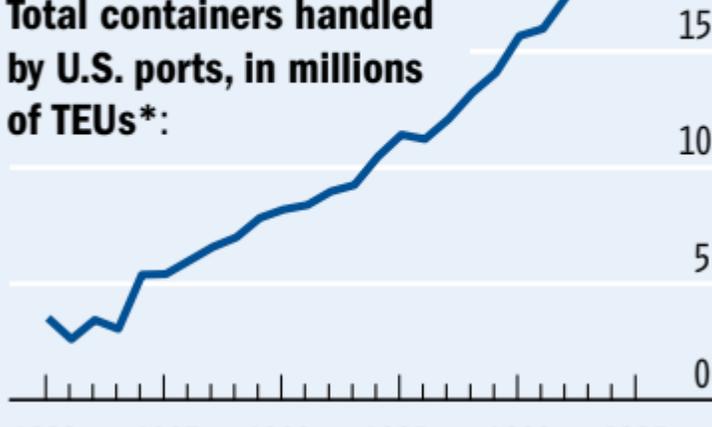
is about to come under scrutiny. A federal antiterrorism program set to go into practice later this year will require port workers—including more than 100,000 drivers like Mr. Rivera who pass through the nation's terminals—to prove they are legal U.S. residents. While Mr. Rivera says he's here on a work permit, many drivers in this predominantly Hispanic work force are believed to be illegal immigrants. For the harbor trucking industry, which already faces a shortage of drivers, the new regulations promise to make the crunch acute.

Washington's bid to ratchet up port security is expected to leave thousands of undocumented drivers without jobs in ports across the country. That would undermine the flow of goods to U.S. consumers, highlighting the crucial role immigrants such as Mr. Rivera play in the nation's economy.

At issue is the Transportation Worker Identification Credential program, or TWIC, a component of the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002. Under this federal program's guidelines, workers with unescorted access to secure U.S. port areas must be legal residents and pass a background check. Disqualifying felonies are likely to include robbery and drug dealing.

Moving Cargo

Port truckers have become increasingly important as ship cargo handled in the U.S. has grown.



* 20-foot-equivalent units

Source: American Association of Port Authorities

Those who pass will be issued biometric identification cards, which include a photo and fingerprints. Workers will gain access to a secure port area by swiping the cards at the entrance.

The worker-credential plan wasn't crafted with illegal immigrant workers in mind. It was an outgrowth of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, which alerted authorities to the vulnerability of U.S. infrastructure and raised concerns that radioactive materials could be smuggled into one of the country's 180 commercial ports. After languishing for years, TWIC—which will be implemented by two Homeland Security divisions, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Transportation Security Administration—is expected to launch late this year, says a TSA spokesman.

The program will require identification cards for about 750,000 port workers nationwide, which include about 110,000 truck drivers, the TSA says. A large proportion of the truckers are Hispanic—as much as 90% at the sprawling, adjacent harbors of Los Angeles and Long Beach, the nation's busiest ports. No one knows for sure how many are illegal immigrants, though estimates range from 20% to 50% nationally. With these truckers out of the work force, major ports such as Houston, Miami and New York-New Jersey would

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Port-Security Plan, a Bid to Foil Terror, May Slow Deliveries

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also be heavily affected.

"We need TWIC for security," says Bill Madden, general manager for terminal services at Long Beach Container Terminal Inc. "But it will cause a big dislocation. The truckers are the guys who make this place work."

Critical Link

The drivers form a critical link between global suppliers to retailers throughout the U.S. Nationwide, they haul everything from spare auto parts and life-saving medical devices to toys and T-shirts from harbors to distribution points 50 or 100 miles away. Working as independent contractors, they are paid a flat per-trip fee—typically \$40 to \$100, depending on the distance between port and warehouse, and averaging about \$55. Most drive aged trucks—known as bobtails—to which they attach trailer rigs. They normally take out loans to buy the trucks, paying them off in monthly installments. The drivers are paid by trucking firms retained by freight forwarders, steamship lines and importers.

Mr. Rivera's experience illustrates why U.S. citizens aren't clamoring for these jobs. On a recent day at noon, the 51-year-old trucker parked his rig in a transportation company's staging yard to wait for an assignment. At 3 p.m., a dispatcher gave him a ticket for the day's first container pickup. Mr. Rivera drove to the Long Beach port so he could be among the first to get his load when the harbor opened for its 6 p.m. night shift.

His first load was a container heading to Kmart, which he dropped at a consolidation yard near the port. By 3 a.m. the next morning, Mr. Rivera had made two additional round trips to retailer warehouses and railway depots in Southern California.

Mr. Rivera bought his truck, which has nearly 900,000 miles on the engine, for \$15,000, plus about \$3,000 more he paid to service a loan. After accounting for fuel, insurance and truck maintenance, he figures he clears about \$2,400 a month. He shares a \$600-a-month, one-room apartment with his wife, Carlota, as well as the youngest of their five children and a 28-year-old niece.

The worst part of the job, Mr. Rivera says, is sitting in line for a container—downtime he's only rarely paid for. "Sometimes I wait four or five hours just to collect one little box," he said, speaking in Spanish. He clears his throat often when he talks. Asked about the cause, he mentions the pollution from the hundreds of trucks idling at one time at the port.

Few Americans want these jobs, says Bob Curry, president of California Cartage Co., a privately held Southern California port-logistics company. The per-trip pay structure of port trucking isn't as attractive as the hourly wages more typical of the local trucking business. Already, Mr. Curry estimates, turnover among the 12,000 drivers who

work the Long Beach-Los Angeles port complex is about 60% each year. "They can haul dirt for more money than cargo," he says.

A cut in the work force could be devastating, as a nationwide work-stoppage earlier this year demonstrated. As few as 10% of all truckers at Los Angeles-Long Beach picked up containers on May 1, when pro-immigration groups called a "Day Without Immigrants." Freeways normally jammed with immigrant-driven rigs were virtually free of trucks.

More than half of all imported apparel and shoes bound for U.S. stores move through Los Angeles or Long Beach ports, says Bruce Berton, officer/director of international business consulting at Stonefield Josephson Inc., a textile and apparel accounting firm. Other ports wouldn't be able to pick up the slack on short notice, he says. Consumers would feel shortages within 30 days. "It would seriously disrupt the econ-

The big concern is that nuclear devices or other weapons could be smuggled from abroad.

omy," says Mr. Berton, who is also on the board of the Export Textile Advisor Commission of the U.S. Department of Trade.

The Transportation Security Administration says it is aware of the ID program's potential impact on port work forces. "We will continue to work with industry, port authorities and workers to address it as we roll out this vital security measure," says Darrin Kayser, manager of strategic initiatives for the TSA.

Demand for port truckers has soared in recent years, as maritime transportation has been revolutionized by containers—large, stackable steel boxes that are easily transferred between ships, trucks and rail cars. More than 14 million twenty-foot equivalent containers moved through Los Angeles-Long Beach in 2005, compared with 9.5 million in 2000. The ports began operating a night shift last year and expect container traffic to increase again this year. Overall, the value of international trade in and out of the U.S. climbed to \$949 billion in 2004, up 29% from 2000.

At the Los Angeles-Long Beach ports, truckers have enormous freedom to roam the terminals. On a recent day, after presenting his driver's license and container number at the gate, Guatemalan immigrant Carlos Ruiz rumbled into a Long Beach terminal, which looks like a massive parking lot on the water's edge. He weaved through row after row of containers stacked four high, driving with relief past a line of truckers waiting for their containers to be plucked from a pile. "If I'd been assigned to a container in that other

row I'd be stuck here another three hours," Mr. Ruiz said.

His container sat halfway down a stack at Row D. There, Mr. Ruiz waited a few minutes for a crane operator—whom he called a "flip-iadora," Spanglish for a woman who "flips" containers—to lower a 40-foot orange container onto his truck. His rig trembled at the 20-ton impact.

The drivers have no idea what the sealed containers hold. Mr. Ruiz, en route to a Target distribution center in nearby Carson, could have been hauling plastic toys or millions of dollars worth of plasma TVs. "I know what's sold at Target, but I have no idea what's in this container," he said.

As Mr. Ruiz headed toward the gate, the number on his container was read by an optical camera and checked against his delivery ticket. A taped message informed him, in English and Spanish, that he was free to exit the terminal. After delivering his load to Target he began the cycle again, picking up an empty container from the retailer's yard and returning it to the port.

The unescorted terminal access of Mr. Ruiz and other drivers is what worries some security officials. They're concerned that truckers, whose vehicles aren't inspected when they enter a terminal, could be persuaded to carry explosives inside, or facilitate passage of lethal cargo. "If a port is a target, these extremely low-income truck drivers are susceptible to bribery," says Jon Have-man, a research fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California, a nonpartisan institute that studies state social, political and economic issues.

Lapses Abound

Experts in security say that lapses abound at the seaports. Port truckers aren't allowed to bring unauthorized guests into a marine terminal, for example. But recently one trucker entered Los Angeles port with his adult son sitting beside him. Both father and son, who asked not to be identified, said that the son frequently rides along.

Immigrant advocates and port experts say truck drivers rank far down the list of potential security threats. The big concern is that nuclear devices or other weapons could be smuggled from abroad and detonated on U.S. shores. U.S. Customs and Border Protection, a Homeland Security division, is addressing smuggling: The agency has struck accords with foreign governments to station U.S. inspectors abroad to examine some U.S.-bound containers. The program is operating at 50 ports so far. On Friday, President Bush signed a law that would place radiation-detection equipment at 22 U.S. ports by the end of next year.

Unauthorized workers often carry false Social Security numbers or work under the names of others. But bosses at the area's dozens of trucking companies

say they're not in the position to verify whether documents provided by employment-seeking immigrants are authentic. Such undocumented drivers account for as many as half of the port-trucking work force nationwide, estimates Michael H. Belzer, professor of industrial relations at Wayne State University. By comparison, more than 50% of crop workers are undocumented, according to the U.S. Labor Department.

Port trucking hasn't always been so unappealing to American workers. Decades ago, when the jobs fell under Teamsters union protection, they offered middle-class wages and benefits. But in the 1970s, major industrial shippers lobbied for an open market to reduce the cost of transporting goods.

When the government deregulated trucking in 1980, nonunion, mom-and-pop trucking firms rushed in. Many union shops folded and most unionized truckers left the ports. Pay and work conditions soon deteriorated, according to Wayne State's Mr. Belzer, who wrote a book on the transformation, "Sweatshops on Wheels." Many of the jobs were taken by Hispanic immigrants.

To protest poor conditions, about 6,000 Latino port truckers in Los Angeles and Long Beach stopped driving in the spring of 1996. Shipping companies and trucking firms were unresponsive and ultimately the campaign failed. "I ruined my credit, lost my car and the trucking company didn't want me back," says Enrique Aguilar, a veteran trucker who stayed away for four months.

A survey conducted in 2004 by Kristin Monaco, a professor at California State University, Long Beach, found that port truckers in Los Angeles-Long Beach earned a median \$25,000 a year after expenses. By comparison, unionized longshoremen, who unload containers from incoming vessels, make about \$110,000.

Trucking companies say they have little power to raise wages to attract new drivers, because new firms are constantly cropping up and offering lower transport rates to importers. Margins are razor-thin. Averting a longer-term driver shortage would require trucking companies to raise pay enough to make driving jobs more attractive. But that would mean charging higher fees, which the trucking companies say importers and freight forwarders are reluctant to accept.

It's not clear whether consumers would feel the impact of a price hike. Currently, for a typical pair of shoes, freight, duty and brokerage charges come to about \$1.15, says Mr. Berton of Stonefield Josephson. Of that, he says, the cost of transporting the shoes from port to distribution center is minimal—about one cent per pair.



Online Today: Read a roundup of the best writing on immigration and border issues from around the Web, at WSJ.com/OnlineToday.

Immigration Spat Poses Big Challenge For L.A.'s Mayor

Mr. Villaraigosa Has to Bridge Divide Between Hispanics And Other Constituents

A Gift of 1,000 Toilet Brushes

By **MIRIAM JORDAN**

LOS ANGELES—Antonio Villaraigosa, this city's telegenic Mexican-American mayor, is being buffeted by the politics of immigration.

Earlier in the year, Mr. Villaraigosa made an impassioned speech to 500,000



Antonio Villaraigosa

protesters who marched on City Hall. But when hundreds of thousands of mostly Hispanic people rallied on May 1, the mayor wasn't on the list of speakers. He was supposed to be flying to Dallas for meetings about bringing an NFL team to Los Angeles. Hours into the rally, a spokesman said he still wasn't

sure about the mayor's plans.

So it came as a surprise when Mr. Villaraigosa, clutching a big American flag, took the stage in the early evening and addressed the marchers packing Wilshire Boulevard. "We all come here for the same reasons," Mr. Villaraigosa, the son of a Mexican immigrant, told the crowd. "We come to work. We come for a better life. We come to participate in the American dream." The mayor called for secure borders and "sensible and fair bipartisan immigration reform." Then, he rushed to the airport.

Los Angeles, a city where nearly half of all residents are foreign-born, has become a leading force in the nation's immigration debate, presenting the city's Democratic mayor with a problem. If Mr. Villaraigosa appears too sympathetic to the cause, he could be pigeonholed as an ethnically driven mayor by both blacks and white conservatives hostile to relaxing immigration laws. Yet appearing critical or even lukewarm about the matter runs the risk of alienating the mayor's biggest and most fervent base of support.

As the immigration debate gathered steam, Mr. Villaraigosa has tried to have it both ways. He has addressed rallies but also urged thousands of Hispanic kids to return to school after they walked out in late March, a move for which he was roundly booed. He also told protesters to carry American, not Mexican, flags during immigration rallies, and said he opposed the Spanish-language version of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Mr. Villaraigosa is the first Latino to run Los Angeles in more than a century, the climax of a longstanding effort by Hispanic activists to gain a voice in city politics. During his frenetic campaign, however, Mr. Villaraigosa avoided championing the immigration cause and pitched himself as a mayor for all. His landslide victory included support from Westside liberals and inner-city blacks, and transcended racial, ethnic and class boundaries.

Any missteps on the immigration issue could jeopardize the mayor's long-term ambitions. "This movement is a threat to Antonio, who is trying to identify himself with Latinos but also wants to appeal to middle-class voters when he gets ready to run for governor," says Joel Kotkin, a senior fellow who specializes in urban issues

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Immigration Spat Poses Challenge for L.A.'s Mayor

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at the New America Foundation, a think tank. Some people who know the mayor say he aspires to run for president.

In an interview, Mr. Villaraigosa demurs when asked about his role in the immigration debate. "I don't believe I am the leader or face of this movement," he says. "I just happen to be the mayor of a city that has a very large immigrant population."

Asked to spell out his position, he replies after a long pause: "I have the responsibility to say to this country that we should secure our borders, enforce our immigration laws and hold people accountable for breaking the law—and also give people a path to citizenship who are paying their taxes, working hard and playing by the rules." His position, a mixture of tough and lenient, is in fact similar to that of President Bush. It might end up pleasing neither side.

In occasionally presenting a sterner posture, "Antonio the rebel and protester has gotten a little lost in Antonio the mayor," says Carol Sobel, a civil-rights lawyer who went to law school with Mr. Villaraigosa.

Since taking charge of the nation's second-largest city in July 2005, Mr. Villaraigosa has made it his business to be everywhere, courting its myriad interest groups in a way not seen since Tom Bradley, L.A.'s mayor from 1973 to 1993. During a day of citywide volunteer services organized by a Jewish congregation, Mr. Villaraigosa peppered his speeches with words such as "mitzvah," Hebrew for worthy deed, and "shul," Yiddish for synagogue. He recently posed for photographs donning a turban, alongside leaders of the city's Sikh community.

Last month, he brokered a deal between the Service Employees International Union and L.A.'s biggest commercial-property owner, paving the way for thousands of mostly black security guards to unionize. Both sides say the deal wouldn't have happened without the mayor's intervention.

"I don't think people have the perception that he is favoring any group," says Eli Broad, a billionaire businessman and philanthropist who contributed to the mayor's campaign.

The mayor's detractors say he's stretching himself thin with an ultra-ambitious agenda. Pet projects include taking control of the county's struggling school system and building a \$2.7 billion subway to the sea, from downtown Los Angeles to Santa Monica. His daily schedule of appearances has also earned him a reputation as someone with a penchant for photo ops. On Good Friday he washed the feet of homeless people—while wearing gloves—in a downtrodden section of the city.

Mr. Villaraigosa was born Antonio Villar, the son of a Mexican immigrant and a second-generation Mexican-American. He grew up in Boyle Heights, an East Los Angeles Latino enclave also home to Jews and Japanese-Americans. Mr. Villaraigosa has repeatedly said he lived in a home where violence and alcoholism were rife. His father left when he was 5. Mr. Villaraigosa invokes his deceased mother, saying she infused him with the values that guide him.

When Mr. Villaraigosa was 16, a benign tumor in his spinal column briefly paralyzed him from the waist down, curtailing his ability to play sports. His grades plummeted at the Roman Catholic school he attended. The next year, he was expelled after getting into a fight.

Mr. Villaraigosa enrolled at Roosevelt High, a large public school in Boyle Heights, where he participated in student walkouts as part of the late 1960s Chicano movement, which fought for better access to education and employment for Mexican-Americans.

He dropped out for a semester, then returned in response to his mother's pleas. Mr. Villaraigosa eventually made it to junior college, thanks to a teacher's mentoring. He transferred to the University of California, Los Angeles where he

honed his skills as an activist.

On graduating, he joined a circle of young Latinos who steadily ascended the city's labor movement and political hierarchy. "We would go out to organize immigrants," recalls Maria Elena Durazo, chief of the Los Angeles County Labor Federation, a labor-union umbrella group. Ms. Durazo is a key figure in the current immigration movement and a friend of the mayor.

After marrying a public school teacher, Corina Raigosa, in 1987, the mayor suggested they merge their last names, forming Villaraigosa (pronounced veeya-ray-GO-zha). They have two children; the mayor also has two daughters from previous relationships, and a grandchild.

Mr. Villaraigosa clinched a seat in the state Assembly in 1994. Four years later, he became speaker—the first from Los Angeles in 24 years. When he decided to run for mayor in 2001, he had both Westside liberals and conservative voters in San Fernando Valley "in the palm of his hand," recalls David Lehrer, president of Community Advocates, a Los Angeles group that tries to promote better relations between the city's various racial groups.

Brutal Campaign

But Mr. Villaraigosa lost a brutal runoff campaign against James Hahn, a veteran Democratic city politician. Mr. Hahn saturated airwaves with a TV ad featuring a grainy image of Mr. Villaraigosa interspersed with someone cutting cocaine with a razor blade and a letter Mr. Villaraigosa wrote in 1996 asking Bill Clinton to pardon a convicted drug dealer. The tag: "Los Angeles can't trust Antonio Villaraigosa."

In 2005, he battled Mr. Hahn again, despite a promise not to break the four-year term he had won on the city council. Latinos, who represent about 25% of the electorate, voted en masse for Mr. Villaraigosa. He also attracted more white and Asian voters than in 2001. Most importantly, he bested his rival among blacks, who had been loyal to the Hahn name for years.

That victory hasn't damped a big problem: the often-contentious relations between the city's Latinos and African-Americans. The stream of Latinos into

black neighborhoods such as Watts has generated friction between two groups at the bottom of the economic ladder. Early this year, blacks and Latinos battled in Los Angeles jails, resulting in several deaths. There have also been some notable brawls in high schools.

As the mayor's attitude toward the immigrant cause comes under the spotlight, "there is a dicey road ahead in regards to the African-American constituency," says Sherry Bebitch Jeffe, a senior scholar at the University of Southern California's School of Policy Plan-

Since taking office, Mr. Villaraigosa has made it his business to be everywhere.

ning and Development. Many African Americans believe that illegal Hispanic immigrants rob them of blue-collar jobs and force down wages.

"Will he be a coalition builder...or will he indeed become the Latino mayor?" asks Earl Ofari Hutchinson, an African-American political analyst who studies black-Latino relations. After Mr. Villaraigosa appeared to embrace the immigration movement, "questions came up again about his sympathies and loyalties," Mr. Hutchinson says.

On the morning of May 1, as thousands of Latinos began congregating downtown ahead of the marches, the mayor hosted a meeting with African-American leaders to discuss a range of issues, including job creation and school overhauls, especially in South L.A.

Among those in attendance was John Hunter, chief pastor of the First African Methodist Episcopal Church, which has 19,500 members. "The mayor is striving to represent every aspect of the community," says Rev. Hunter in an interview. Yet he also notes the immigration question could be a divisive one. "The African-American community is not completely together on the issue."

The following week, Mr. Villaraigosa

convened a meeting with mainly white leaders of local construction trade unions to tell them "we have to get more African-Americans in the building trades and in apprenticeship programs." Construction jobs often go to Latin American immigrants, many of whom are in the U.S. illegally.

Despite efforts to placate critics, Mr. Villaraigosa has been pounded for every perceived misstep on the immigration issue—and from all sides. At one rally, Mr. Villaraigosa argued that immigrant workers make the country run. They "clean your toilets," he told the crowd. Listeners to a conservative radio show mailed more than 1,000 toilet brushes to City Hall. "A lot of people look at Villaraigosa and they see an illegal alien," says KFI AM radio host John Kobylt, who opposes loosening immigration rules. "There's no end to how much we'll milk this."

A Tougher Line

After the massive March 25 rally, Mr. Villaraigosa appeared to take a tougher line with immigration protesters. When thousands of Hispanic students spilled into the streets that month to protest an immigration bill, the mayor urged them to return to school. The students booed him and refused to leave. Ahead of the May 1 rally, he called on parents to keep their children in school and for teenagers to stay in the classroom. He made it clear he opposed an economic boycott.

The mayor says he put himself in the shoes of parents who would want their kids in school. His aides add that Los Angeles school system can ill afford to lose state funding, which is tied to student attendance.

Mr. Villaraigosa says he isn't turning his back on the immigration cause. He also isn't letting it dominate his agenda. Last week, he was in Washington, D.C., lobbying for federal funds with the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. His trip happened to coincide with that of a range of groups calling for a "national lobbying day" for immigrants, as the Senate resumed discussions on a bill.

Mr. Villaraigosa didn't join them. He had to get back to L.A. to attend meetings about bidding for the Olympics.

In Belgium, Memories of War Lie Near the Surface

Continued From First Page

squad because of the sheer numbers: They would have to spend all their time stopping traffic and evacuating houses. So five days each week during the spring and summer, the squad digs eight holes in the morning and eight in the afternoon in a muddy field on their base to blow up high explosives. Nearby, hundreds more bombs are stacked like firewood in warehouses, awaiting their turn in the demolition pits.

Those containing gas get special treatment: Specialists X-ray them and bombard them with gamma rays to determine the exact contents. Soldiers in green contamination suits drill holes in the casings to drain them.

Late last month, the military started excavating the largest bomb dump on record. Alone, it could double the year's take of ordnance to more than 660 tons.

Standing on the edge of a 12-foot-deep trench where Belgian soldiers clear the mud from neatly stacked bombs, Jan Savelkoels, a commander in the Belgian Air Force who specializes in bomb disposal, says the military found out about the site late last year. An aging member of one of the early bomb squads happened to mention it at a reunion party.

In 1919, just after the war, the Belgian government collected about 330 U.S. tons of German shells and buried them here under a layer of concrete, the veteran explained. At the time, a



Three members of the Belgian military's bomb-disposal team examine a German shell near Poelkapelle.

fence protected the site. But over the decades, the fence fell apart, farmers started planting on top of the buried cache and nearly everybody forgot it was there.

The military was skeptical, but the man's detailed account sounded credible enough to check out. A quick scan of the ground lighted up metal detectors. Cmdr. Savelkoels figures it will now take his 12-man crew a couple of months to clear the site.

Work there begins each morning with a security briefing at which an officer presents a weather report showing the strength and direction of the wind—important information should a gas bomb go off. The crew has to interrupt its work whenever a train passes on tracks that run within 100 yards of the dig, to avoid endangering passengers in the event of a gas leak. That

hasn't happened.

Most of the bomb squad's work, however, comes from the discoveries by farmers like Mr. Cardoen-Descamps and his wife, Charlotte. Over the years, the couple has developed an interest in the war and collected trench maps. One shows that their small hotel and farm lie directly on top of an old German artillery position.

About two years ago, the blade of Mr. Cardoen-Descamps's plow cracked open a bomb and sparked some of its explosive cordite, sending a 30-foot-high flame into the air, he says.

He admits to being unnerved by the experience but says there wasn't much he could do: He just kept plowing. Friends nearby, he says, have had more frightening experiences. One drove over a shell last year, exploding it. A piece of shrapnel ripped through the friend's tractor but left him untouched.

For Mr. Cardoen-Descamps, who is 51, the shells have nevertheless turned into a little side business. After working as a farmer all his life, he and his wife eight years ago turned their place into a B&B called Varlet Farm, catering almost exclusively to World War I enthusiasts.

In a shed on the grounds he displays a collection of about 200 artifacts ranging from guns to empty shells to buttons from soldiers' uniforms. And each guest gets a souvenir, maybe a shrapnel ball or a piece of an old shell.

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Dan-el Padilla
on the Princeton campus.

Davis S. Holloway/Getty Images

Illegal at Princeton

By MIRIAM JORDAN

DAN-EL PADILLA Peralta, a 21-year-old classics major at Princeton University, has risen from a childhood in homeless shelters and blighted apartments to maintain a 3.9 grade-point average. He has won prize after prize, often taking twice the typical course load. One faculty member, writing a recommendation, predicted “he will be one of the best classicists to emerge in his generation.”

Mr. Padilla stands out at

Dan-el Padilla beat poverty and homelessness to become a star student. He still may have to leave the country.

Princeton for another reason: He’s an illegal immigrant. And two weeks ago, he did something few people in his shoes ever do. He turned himself in.

Mr. Padilla recently won a two-year scholarship to Oxford University in the United Kingdom. But according to longstanding immigration

law, if he leaves, he can’t return to the U.S.—his home since the age of 4—for at least 10 years.

While his case is exceptional, Mr. Padilla’s predicament reflects the cacophony of messages a conflicted nation sends to illegal immigrants. This spring, at least 65,000 undocumented immigrant students, many of whom have been in this country most of their lives, will graduate from high school. The Constitution guarantees a public-school K-12 education for every child in the U.S.

But after that, their future is
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Illegal at Princeton: Star Student Dan-el Padilla Faces Uncertain Future

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uncertain. They can't work legally and undocumented students can't qualify for federal grants and loans or work-study programs that would help finance higher education. Only an estimated 10% to 15% of undocumented students who graduate from high school muster enough resources to pay for college, according to the National Immigration Law Center, a pro-immigrant group. There are an estimated two million illegal immigrants under the age of 18.

Ten states, including California, Texas and Oklahoma, have tried to make it more affordable for illegal immigrants who have graduated from local high schools to attend college by allowing them to pay in-state fees at public universities. Many private universities admit undocumented students, although getting them financial aid is often difficult because of their status.

In Mr. Padilla's case, some institutions—like the elite Collegiate private school he attended in New York—never even asked about his status. Princeton knew he was in the U.S. illegally, yet awarded him a scholarship anyway.

Bipartisan legislation was introduced in 2001 that would grant permanent residency to young people brought to the U.S. at least five years ago who have completed high school. Sponsors have never been able to convince Congressional leaders to allow a vote. Opponents say students who came to the U.S. illegally shouldn't be entitled to any form of amnesty or limited educational resources. "How much sense does that make, to have people here illegally and they have more benefits than those who are here legally?" says Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, a Republican.

When an undocumented student is allowed into a college, "there is another kid who wasn't admitted because we admitted the illegal alien," says Ira Mehlman, spokesman of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, a national organization that advocates a restrictive immigration policy. "Every time you admit someone who is here illegally, you are necessarily saying no to somebody else."

Mr. Padilla is hoping to convince the government that "extraordinary circumstances"—including being abandoned by his father and being homeless—explain why he didn't file a request to change his status earlier.

Christopher Bentley, a spokesman for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, says the agency doesn't discuss individual cases. "We adjudicate each

case based specifically on the evidence presented in that case," he says.

To pay his legal fees, Mr. Padilla raised \$10,000 among friends and others in a matter of weeks. His 236-page petition to the immigration service includes school records, SAT scores and dozens of letters from senior officials of Princeton and Collegiate, his secondary school in Manhattan. The petition also includes a letter from his mentor, who first spotted Mr. Padilla at a shelter in Brooklyn, then a diminutive nine-year-old with buck teeth, curled up with a biography of Napoleon.

MR. PADILLA ARRIVED in New York at the age of 4 in 1989 with his parents, middle-class government workers in the Dominican Republic. Mr. Padilla's mother, Maria Elena Peralta, was pregnant. She says she was told that she and her fetus were in danger due to diabetes-related complications. Treatment would be better in the U.S. So the whole family entered the U.S. on a temporary, non-immigrant, six-month visa.

Mr. Padilla's brother, Yando, was born in the U.S. After complications following his birth, the family decided to stay. Ms. Peralta says they paid a fee and filled out a form at a private immigration service to extend their visas but never heard back. Jobless and frustrated, Mr. Padilla's father, Domingo, returned to the Dominican Republic in 1993. They hear from him periodically, but he has visited them only twice, they say. Ms. Peralta stayed in the U.S. with the boys. "I knew they would have more opportunities in America," she says.

A Puerto Rican friend made his basement available to them for two weeks until a pipe burst and flooded the area. The family moved to a shelter in the South Bronx, then another in Chinatown. His mother tried to supplant meals with plantains and other Dominican foods she bought with the welfare checks she got on behalf of her U.S.-born toddler: \$42.50 twice a month. Mr. Padilla mainly remembers the drugs, fights, filthy bathrooms and "people whose lives were in pieces."

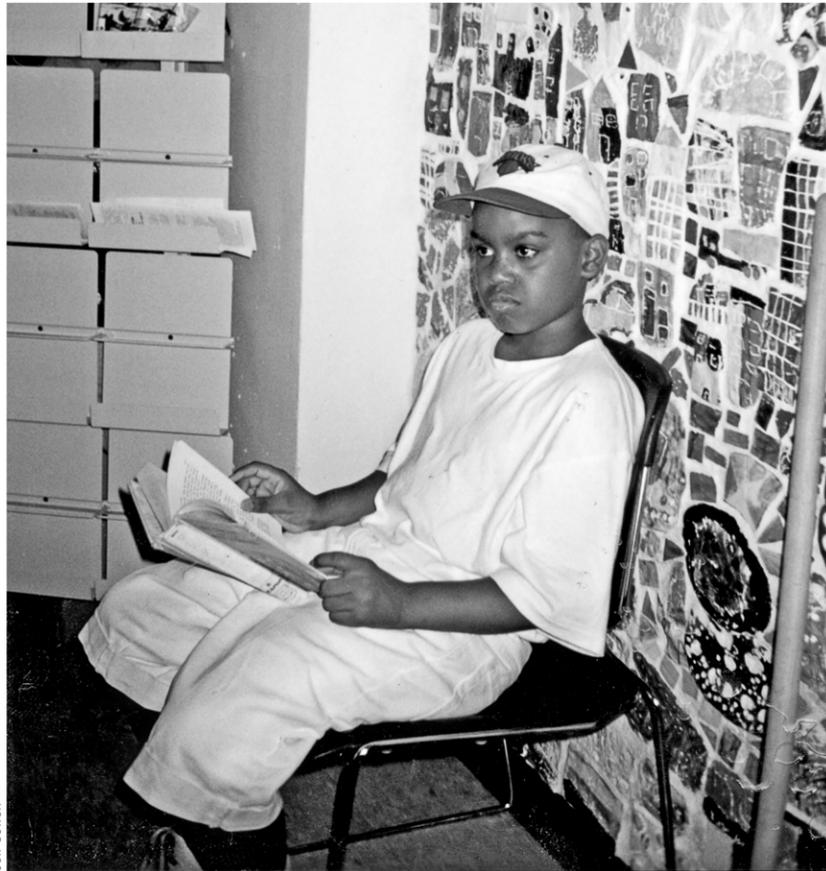
Mr. Padilla's favorite part of the day was spent at P.S. 2 in Chinatown, where he was the only Latino in the fourth-grade class. "I loved school," he says. "It was a relief to me."

There he discovered his math couldn't stand up to that of his peers. He also won his first academic prize, for the highest reading score on a standardized test. The award was a small certificate and a \$50 check. "It took us a while to find a check-cashing place on Canal Street," Mr. Padilla recalls. They bought books.

In May 1994, the family was moved by New York City's social services to the Bushwick Family Shelter, a shelter in Brooklyn. There he met Jeff Cowen, then a 29-year-old photographer who had decided to teach art part time to underprivileged children. Mr. Cowen, whose great-grandfather founded a Wall Street brokerage house now known as SG Cowen, grew up in Manhattan, attending prestigious private schools.

Mr. Padilla was reading in the corner during their first encounter, Mr. Cowen recalls. The boy greeted Mr. Cowen politely and informed him he was from the Dominican Republic. He then recited a litany of facts about the country, from its population to its primary crop—sugar cane, for which he recited the country's annual production.

"He had an innate capacity to remove himself from the destructive environment and create a world of his own," recalls Mr. Cowen, 40, who now lives in Paris. Mr. Padilla's interest in classics began at age 9



Jeff Cowen

Dan-el Padilla at the Bushwick Family shelter in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1994.

when he discovered a dusty book on ancient Athens at the shelter.

The family later moved to an apartment in Harlem, in an area filled with crack dealers. The heat worked sporadically, so they often slept with coats on, Ms. Peralta recalls. New York City, like other cities and most states, offers public assistance for U.S.-born children, even if their parents are illegal immigrants. Undocumented immigrants can get some housing benefits because their U.S.-born children are entitled to them.

When Ms. Peralta took her younger son for checkups—as a U.S. citizen, he was eligible for Medicaid—she would ask the pediatrician to also check Mr. Padilla, who lacked health insurance because of his immigration status. "The doctor made me promise not to tell anyone, and I would give her \$10 or \$15 to show my gratitude," she recalls.

By age 10, Mr. Padilla immersed himself in Sophocles, ancient European and American history. "He didn't like it when we gave him toys and games," recalls his mother. "He only wanted books."

Mr. Cowen took Mr. Padilla and his brother to the movies, the playground and his mother's house near the shore in Westport, Conn. Over the mild disapproval of her church priest, Ms. Peralta says she made Mr. Cowen—who is Jewish—the godfather of her two sons.

Mr. Cowen made it his mission to help Mr. Padilla win a scholarship to a first-rate school. He arranged tutorials for Mr. Padilla in math with a teacher who volunteered her time. He also introduced Mr. Padilla to officials at Manhattan's Collegiate, one of the nation's oldest schools, which Mr. Cowen had attended.

On the day Mr. Cowen heard that Mr. Padilla had been accepted to seventh grade on a full scholarship, Mr. Cowen trudged through heavy snow to reach Collegiate, where he bought two school T-shirts. He then went to Harlem to break the news to Mr. Padilla and his mother. After he told them, he says, everyone broke into tears.

It never occurred to school officials to ask about Mr. Padilla's immigration sta-

tus, Collegiate officials say.

Mr. Cowen says he also didn't know Mr. Padilla was undocumented. Their relationship had always been "about keeping food on the table, helping this talented kid and being a role model for him," he says.

Collegiate, an exclusive school attended by John F. Kennedy Jr., is known for its rigorous academics. When Mr. Padilla attended, there were four other minority students in his class.

"By the end of his first year at Collegiate, Dan-el was the most popular kid in the class," says Nick Moscow, a close friend. In ninth grade, he was elected class president.

Mr. Padilla says he never felt uncomfortable socially, although he remembers being "thunderstruck" by the bar-mitzvah parties he attended and the opulent Upper East Side apartments where some of his classmates lived. To avoid attracting attention on the way to the subway in central Harlem each morning, he sometimes took off his tie and shoved his school blazer into his backpack until he got to school.

At Collegiate, Mr. Padilla mastered Greek and Latin, and achieved fluency in French. As a debater, he qualified for the National Tournament of Champions, one of few Collegiate students to do so, according to the Head of the Upper School, John Beall. Mr. Padilla "was one of the most powerful intellects ever to grace our halls," he says. He read many passages of Greek tragedies in Greek and wrote a paper on Euripides's "Bacchae," which his Latin and Greek teacher says she still has her students read today.

ON HIS PRINCETON application, Mr. Padilla checked a box declaring he wasn't a U.S. citizen. Seeing him as a foreign student, a university official said he needed to return to the Dominican Republic in order to apply for a student visa required of foreign students. To find out what the consequences of going back to his home country would be, Mr. Padilla spoke with a lawyer arranged by Prep for

Prep, a New York program that helps minority kids who are college-bound. He told Princeton that if he went to the Dominican Republic he wouldn't be allowed back into the U.S.

The university ultimately overlooked his immigration status and gave him a full scholarship, consisting of financial-aid grants that didn't include federally funded programs. Princeton "doesn't take documentation status into account when making admission decisions," says a spokeswoman for the university. She says Princeton has enrolled fewer than half a dozen illegal immigrants in the past four years.

"He could have been from the moon and I would have admitted him," says Fred Hargadon, dean of admissions at Princeton at the time Mr. Padilla applied.

Entering Princeton in 2002, he enrolled in a freshman seminar on Ovid's "Metamorphoses." On the first day of class, students were asked why they had chosen the course. "Many answered, as I did, that it looked interesting in the course guide," says Rachel Zuraw, a friend from Del Mar, Calif. She recalls Mr. Padilla's answer: He had been studying Latin for years and had already translated many stories from the "Metamorphoses."

In recognition of his academic achievement that year, Mr. Padilla won the Freshman First Honor Prize, which is awarded each year to one Princeton student, out of a class of 1,100.

Kelly Sanabria, another friend from Princeton, asked Mr. Padilla to lecture on the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" at a community college in the South Bronx where her father teaches. Mr. Padilla accepted the assignment, even though he was taking the graduate-school entrance exam the next day. He engaged the students—most of whom were Latino immigrants—with a dialogue that began with the recent movie "Troy" and continued through Achilles, the abduction of Helen and other key parts of the plot.

Few classmates knew that Mr. Padilla was an illegal immigrant. In the fall of sophomore year, Mr. Padilla says he and two friends ran into a female friend at a study break and were "hanging out just chatting." The subject of illegal immigrants came up because of a newspaper article.

"This common friend—someone I had somewhat of a crush on for a bit—expressed her belief that they were a drain on the economy," Mr. Padilla recalls. She complained that jobs were being taken by illegal workers and wondered "why did they have any right to the resources of the U.S. when they were here illegally."

Mr. Padilla says he didn't reveal his personal situation.

Mr. Padilla has returned frequently to New York to translate for his mother, who works cleaning houses and runs a group at her church. She is trying to avoid eviction from her Harlem apartment now that the rent has been raised to \$865 from \$257.

Now in his last semester of his senior year, Mr. Padilla is immersed in two theses—one for his major in classics, and another for his minor at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, where he has concentrated on educational policy.

Unlike other Princeton students studying classics, he has never been able to visit Athens, Rome or other sites of the ancient world. The closest he has come to a physical connection to his study is to handle the Roman carved headstones at Princeton, which he is researching for his thesis.

In February, Mr. Padilla was awarded a scholarship for two years of study at Oxford University's Worcester College, starting next fall. Past winners of the award include Anne-Marie Slaughter, dean of the Woodrow Wilson School, and

Elena Kagan, dean of Harvard Law School.

That pushed him toward making what he calls the hardest decision of his life: going to the immigration authorities.

THE WORRY ABOUT what he would do after graduation—without a Social Security number or the right to work—had been hanging over him since he started college. His hope to build a life in the U.S., where he wants to pursue a teaching career, required legal status. The chance to attend Oxford spurred him to act. If he goes to Oxford without resolving his status, he won't be able to return to the U.S. for a decade. He wouldn't be able to visit his mother or brother.

Even if he didn't go to Oxford, he would be unable to obtain any legal employment in the U.S. upon graduating from Princeton or receive admission to a graduate school program because they require paid teaching responsibilities.

In a matter of weeks, Mr. Padilla raised \$10,000 to pay a flat fee set by his attorney. Mr. Padilla says he benefited from the generosity of a Princeton faculty member and New Yorkers affiliated with Prep for Prep.

After exploring options, Steve Yale-Loehr, Mr. Padilla's attorney, decided to bet on a clause for "extraordinary circumstances," noting that Mr. Padilla was abandoned by his father, his mother was ill and the family was homeless, to justify why Mr. Padilla didn't file an application for status adjustment in a timely fashion—17 years ago. Regulations allow the immigration agency to accept a non-timely change of status application under certain circumstances. The petition requests that Mr. Padilla's expired tourist visa be changed to a student visa, which would allow him to go abroad and then return to the U.S. without penalty.

"It would be a waste to give Dan-el's potential to another country," says Mr. Cowen, who hasn't seen Mr. Padilla since 1999, and only recently learned of his predicament after getting an email from him. "It is education itself that Dan-el used to pull himself out of the ghetto...The future of the U.S. depends on education."

Only a handful of friends at Princeton know the extent of his immigration predicament. "I don't like burdening my friends," Mr. Padilla says. But sometimes he is stung by what he hears. Earlier this month, he was upset by comments against illegal immigrants posted by a classmate on a campus blog. The posting said that illegal immigrants hurt the economy and deprive African-Americans of jobs. Mr. Padilla responded to the posting, calling the stance "willfully anti-humanitarian."

"It's always possible that Immigration might begin deportation proceedings against me," he says, digging into a sandwich at a Princeton deli. "I very much try not to linger over these problems."

As his future hangs in the balance, Mr. Padilla remains focused on completing his theses; the second and last one, in classics, is due Monday. He plans to celebrate at a Yankees game, not far from his mother's apartment.

Marrying a U.S. citizen could fix his problem relatively quickly. David Lovener, who chairs the selection committee for the Oxford scholarship, says Mr. Padilla has received several "unsolicited proposals from well-meaning classmates." Mr. Padilla says he has declined them all.



Jeff Cowen

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Trading Places

How Immigration Upended Dreams Of an Entrepreneur

Mr. Hairston's Stucco Workers Quit to Become His Rivals; Illegals Drive Prices Down

A Wife's Political Riposte

By MIRIAM JORDAN

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C.—About five years ago, the journey of Starletta and William Hairston from the underclass to the upper class hit a roadblock.

Both were born to poor black Southern families. William, a stucco subcontractor, built a thriving business beautifying houses in the gated communities on this resort island, a magnet for wealthy retirees seeking a laid-back lifestyle by the sea. Starletta, a former flight attendant, won accolades for her community activism.



Starletta Hairston

Then Hilton Head suddenly saw a wave of illegal immigrant workers from Mexico. Mr. Hairston, 54 years

old, initially hired the Hispanic newcomers for his stucco business, helping it flourish. But soon, some of those same workers splintered off to form their own businesses, undercutting Mr. Hairston with lower bids to capture jobs. The Hairstons' net income plunged from roughly \$500,000 in 1997 to about \$70,000 in 2005, according to the couple.

To stay afloat, the Hairstons remortgaged their house twice and sold a condominium and a plot of land. Mr. Hairston now hustles for jobs in Charlotte, N.C., and beyond, looking for better opportunities. Meanwhile, Starletta Hairston, 53, won election to the Beaufort County Council, where she has joined a wave of local officials around the country trying to pass new laws cracking down on illegal immigrants.

Amid the debate over illegal immigration, one of the most contentious questions is whether unauthorized workers from Mexico and other Latin American countries displace U.S. workers, especially low-wage workers in agriculture, cleaning and construction.

The Hairstons' saga shows that the issue is not just about low-paid workers, but also entrepreneurs who set out to make their own fortune. As an ambitious small-business man, Mr. Hairston helped himself to undocumented immigrant labor and thrived with it. But as more immigrants flocked to the area and acquired skills, some of them harnessed



William Hairston

their own entrepreneurial drive and became competitors.

Mr. Hairston got his start in the plastering business in his native North Carolina. His business took off in Atlanta in the late 1980s when construction in the city boomed. Mr. Hairston married Starletta, the daughter of a maid who raised eight children alone, in 1985. The next year they had a son, William III. The couple restored a dilapidated boarding house in downtown Atlanta and moved in.

By the mid-1990s, stucco jobs increasingly took Mr. Hairston and his predominantly black crew from Atlanta to Hilton Head Island. Mr. Hairston fell in love with the moss-draped oak trees and intercoastal waterways inhabited by snowy egrets. Golf and hotels had turned the area into a resort mecca, and in the mid-1990s, a housing boom in the area allowed Beaufort County to boast the fastest growth and lowest unemployment in the state. "There was tons of work ... and only a couple stucco contractors in the whole area," recalls Mr. Hairston, a tall, strong man who sports a shaved head and a goatee. For some time, he commuted from Atlanta, living in motels or houses that he rented for himself and his employees. "He was a good subcontractor," says Ellis Smith, owner of Sandcastle Constructors, a local home builder for whom Mr. Hairston did several stucco jobs.

Mr. Hairston eventually convinced Starletta to leave Atlanta for Hilton Head. Mrs. Hairston had just had the couple's

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Immigration Upended Dreams of an Entrepreneur

Continued From First Page

second son, Skylor, when she arrived in 1993. In Hilton Head, the Hairstons were far from their roots. They rented houses in tony gated communities. Typically the only black family, the couple says they endured complaints from white neighbors who didn't like seeing company trucks parked in the driveway or their son's plastic playhouse in the yard.

Mr. Hairston's business thrived. He says there was more work than he could keep up with, and a dearth of locals willing to do the heavy lifting required of stucco work: mixing and lugging buckets of cement, for example. "It was hard to find people willing to work sunrise to sunset," says Mr. Hairston. Many people, he added, only "worked long enough to keep their trailer lights on."

Latin American immigrants were just starting to trickle into the area, as word spread that jobs in construction and hospitality were plentiful. Immigrants were increasingly bypassing traditional gateways, like California and Texas, to seek work in the Southeast.

So Mr. Hairston, who until then had mostly relied on black labor, hired a handful of Mexicans. He says they were diligent and eager to learn. They were "prepared to acquire basic knowledge and not afraid to try" new work, says Mr. Hairston. When he needed more hands, his Mexican workers sent for their relatives back home and elsewhere in the U.S. Mr. Hairston says they presented Social Security numbers, and he in turn paid taxes and workers' compensation although he acknowledges some of them had probably entered the U.S. illegally.

In 1997 the stucco business made \$971,000, according to the Hairstons' tax return. To handle his blossoming business, Mr. Hairston rented a large office with four rooms, two restrooms and warehouse space behind it. He bought a condominium and a plot of land as investments. Flush with success, the Hairstons broke ground on a 7,600-square-foot, three-story house with an ornate gold-and-black gate, a cherub fountain in the front and a large swimming pool in the back.

As Hilton Head prospered, more and more Mexican immigrants flocked there. From 1% of the population in 1995, Latinos accounted for 11% of Hilton Head's 34,000 residents in 2000, according to census figures. Officials peg the current Latino population at about 15%.

One immigrant who prospered was Fidel Serrano.

After eking out a living as a baker at a doughnut shop in Houston for five years, Mr. Serrano moved to Hilton Head Island in 1994, joining two brothers who had recently settled there. "There was plenty of work and life was calmer here for the kids," recalls Mr. Serrano, a native of Mexico. Mr. Serrano, his wife, two sons and two brothers rented a rundown two-room trailer, for which they collectively paid \$600 a month.

Mr. Serrano began to work in stucco,

perfecting his skills as an employee of Mr. Hairston's Pro Plastering & Stucco. He says he earned \$8 to \$10 an hour during the two-and-a-half years he worked for Mr. Hairston. In the beginning, Mr. Serrano recalls, Mr. Hairston still employed several black workers. But gradually Mr. Hairston came to rely more on Mr. Serrano and other Mexican immigrants. "We showed up for work every day and we were dedicated," Mr. Serrano recalls.

On His Own

Around 2000, Mr. Serrano struck out on his own, working as a subcontractor to Mr. Hairston. He supplied Mr. Hairston with crews for several jobs. "I was able to train the workers," who were all Spanish speakers, he recalls. Mr. Hairston typically paid him about 25% of the value of the contract for the job, he says. Mr. Serrano says that he pays taxes on all his workers, as well as workman's compensation.

Mr. Hairston says that for a while it didn't bother him that some of his Latino

William Hairston's stucco business gradually began to unravel.

workers, like the Serranos, struck out on their own. "I never thought I would be competing against them," he says. But he felt particularly stung when he encountered one of his workers—who had asked for two weeks off—working on an \$80,000 job on a high-end house that Mr. Hairston's company had bid for.

Mr. Hairston's business gradually began to unravel. Mr. Hairston "would bid and another guy who used to work for him would bid on the same job," recalls Greg Goldberg, another builder, who is currently president of the local home builders' association. Mr. Goldberg himself says he hired some of Mr. Hairston's former workers.

Mr. Hairston says that he never knew by how much he was undercut because the bidding process in construction isn't open. Builders often approach two or three subcontractors and invite them to make an estimate for a project. The builders rarely reveal the value of the winning bid to the losing parties.

Mr. Hairston says that he found himself losing bid after bid. Longtime customers didn't want him, he says—a fact the contractors confirm. "We get happy with a subcontractor that does good work and we'll use him all the time," says Mr. Smith of Sandcastle Constructors. Currently, he employs Premium Stucco, owned by Fidel Serrano, Mr. Hairston's former employee. "They do an excellent job," he says, noting that they are working on a \$2 million house

that his company is building.

Mr. Serrano received his green card last year and bought a three-bedroom house. Most of his jobs are in luxurious gated communities, some of the same ones where Mr. Hairston thrived a decade ago. "Work is the only thing you can do to better yourself," Mr. Serrano says. "We aren't expecting the government or anyone to support us." He says that Mr. Hairston does good work and declines to comment about his former boss's financial difficulties.

In addition to facing competition from former workers, Mr. Hairston says he also faced competition from subcontractors hiring illegal immigrants and paying them under the table. Mr. Hairston says that while he hired undocumented workers he paid payroll taxes and workman's compensation for them which added about 20% to his labor costs.

Other subcontractors agree they are being undercut by competitors who hire illegal immigrants off the books. Danny Miller, who runs a stucco business called Two Brothers, says that "on a weekly" basis, his company loses bids for jobs to contractors who hire illegal immigrants. "That pretty much explains it all," says Mr. Miller.

At Sea Island Supply, owner Ron Sandlin remembers when mainly blacks and whites came in to buy brick, stucco and masonry materials. Now, his clientele is 85% Hispanic. He and his staff are taking Spanish lessons at a local college.

Though construction in Hilton Head continued to boom, Mr. Hairston closed his business office in 2002. He began to seek jobs in other markets. By 2003, revenue from Mr. Hairston's stucco business had fallen to \$182,000 from \$971,000 six years earlier.

As their fortunes were souring, Mrs. Hairston, a Republican who had become involved in community activities, decided to run for a seat on the 11-member County Council of Beaufort County. Her long hair usually adorned with a headband, she campaigned on improving conditions in impoverished areas. In a runoff, she defeated her white male Republican opponent by 50 votes and took office in January 2003.

Political Inspiration

Shortly after taking office, Mrs. Hairston requested a meeting with Hilton Head Mayor Tom Peeples, himself a residential developer. "William didn't understand why he couldn't win any bids. I thought, 'Let's find out what we can do,'" recalls Mrs. Hairston. "We went in there to say we were willing to work with him," says Mr. Hairston. Mr. Peeples told them that it was about who could give him the best price, according to the couple.

Mr. Peeples didn't reply to several messages left at his business office and voice mail.

Gradually, Mrs. Hairston found a new political inspiration: the immigration issue. "I saw inequities," she says, adding she also felt illegal immigrant workers were being exploited. Others see her moti-

vation differently: "Starletta got bitter because of her husband's business," says Juan Campos, a Hilton Head restaurateur and Latino activist. Mrs. Hairston says she isn't motivated by her husband's plight, noting that Mr. Hairston no longer does business in the area.

In September, Mrs. Hairston presented a draft of an "illegal immigration relief ordinance" to the County Council. Under the ordinance, companies that knowingly hire undocumented laborers could have their business licenses revoked. The ordinance would require that all businesses volunteer to participate in a federal government pilot program that verifies whether a Social Security number matches an individual's name. It would bar illegal immigrants from getting a business license.

If the ordinance passes, "costs for yard service, green fees and house paint-

ing might escalate marginally for a while," Mrs. Hairston says, but "we will hold the moral and ethical high ground."

Loud Opposition

The County Council voted overwhelmingly to move the proposal forward in the first and second readings. But after loud opposition from Hispanic residents and many employers, the council instead approved on Monday a watered-down version called "lawful employment ordinance," which is less controversial and mainly reinforces existing federal and county employment codes. The council is to take its final vote on Dec. 27.

Whether the ordinance passes or not, it's not helping the Hairstons now. Starletta Hairston lost a Republican primary in June and will go off the council next year. William Hairston hasn't bid on a job in Beaufort County for at least two years. Instead he flies to North Carolina every week, where he says he uses a

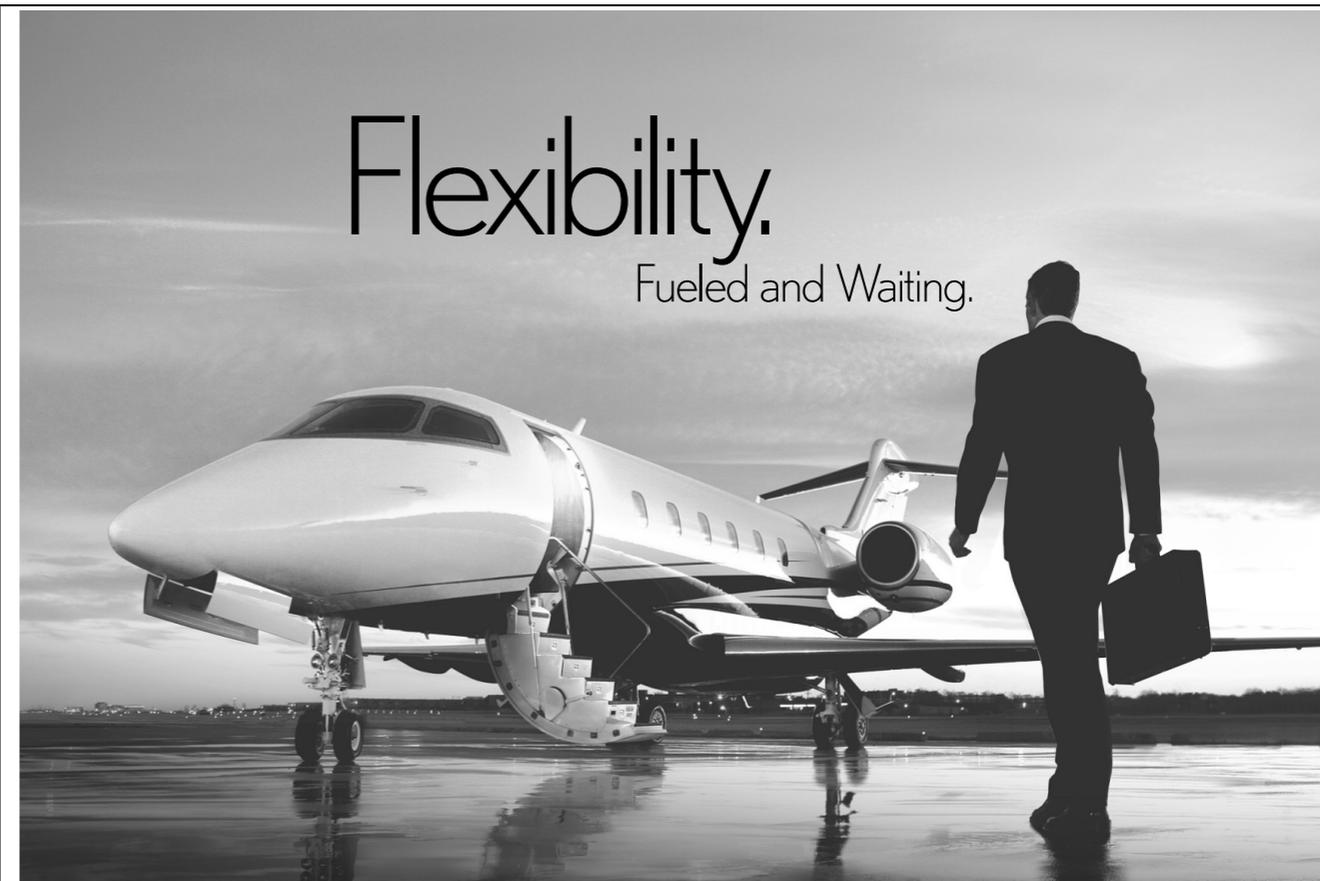
native-born, mostly black crew.

Mr. Hairston remains in touch with some of his old workers. A few months ago, Paul Serrano, who with his brother Fidel left to form a rival stucco company, approached Mr. Hairston to help him secure a green card which would put Paul Serrano on the path to citizenship and allow him to travel back and forth legally to Mexico to visit his elderly mother who is ill.

Mr. Hairston agreed to fill out forms attesting to his former employee's business skills and good character. He says he did it as an act of compassion but acknowledges the larger irony.

"He's my competition and I just signed papers to get him legal," says Mr. Hairston. "I'm making it possible for him to live the American dream."

WSJ.com **Question of the Day:** *What is the net effect of illegal immigration on the U.S. economy? Visit WSJ.com/Question to vote.*



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