
Letters to the Editor

Immigration laws promote evil

To the editor:

As a citizen of Oberlin, I am disappointed by the Tribune's editorial of Nov. 18 which objects to the non-cooperation resolution being considered by our city council. You make "the law" sound like a pristine and perfect thing that trumps or replaces our own consciences. Would you have enforced the Fugitive Slave Law by sending John Price back to Kentucky?

Would you have enforced civil disturbance laws by pulling Rosa Parks off the bus, or turning a fire hose on the civil rights demonstrators in Birmingham? Would you have enforced the laws that segregated our schools? I hope not.

It is obvious that some laws are good while other laws are bad, and many great thinkers — Charles Langston, Henry David Thoreau, Mohandas Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr. to name just a few — considered it a moral and civic duty to disobey bad laws as a part of the agitation for their repeal. Even this nation's founding fathers believed such, flouting what was then the law and even destroying property as demonstrated in the Boston Tea Party.

Why do I consider our immigration laws to be bad? Because they encourage selfishness, paranoia, callousness, and xenophobia. I was brought up to believe that it is a virtue to feed the hungry, to welcome the stranger, to clothe the needy, to shelter the homeless, to lift up the oppressed, and to look after the sick and destitute. The law would have us practice these virtues only toward those with legal status. I was brought up to treat all people well, no matter who they are. If, as a result of our adopting this resolution, someone gets the idea that kind, generous, compassionate people live in Oberlin, so be it.

A person who is dealing drugs, raping children, robbing businesses, or burning down the FAA can be arrested for those things. But I do not understand how deporting restaurant workers contributes in any significant way to public safety or the war on terror. If ICE agents cannot tell the difference between bombs and burritos, or between felons and fry-cooks, then they ought to find a different line of work.

**Tom Lock
Oberlin**

She objects to 'safe haven' law

To the editor:

This is about Oberlin being a "safe haven" for illegal aliens. In my opinion, if you live and work in the United States you should learn our language and pay our taxes.

My mother came from another country. She learned our language and became a citizen. She ran a very successful legal business and paid taxes.

The law was clear then and the law is clear now.

**Nadine Hanmer Glime
Oberlin**

'All people are created equal'

To the editor:

I am writing in regard to your recent editorial calling for the enforcement of all laws, whether just or unjust. As a libertarian, I cannot agree with such an alien position.

Nothing better states the American view of government's proper role than the English colonists' Declaration of Independence from the British Empire, penned by Thomas Jefferson — all people are created equal. Where human rights are concerned, no one is inferior or superior to others. Laws, and also governments that create and enforce laws, must recognize that all people have the same rights and treat them equally.

Each individual has rights, many of them, such as the right to travel peacefully wherever he or she may want to go provided it's done without violating the rights of other individuals. Some of the more important of these rights are the inalienable rights to life, to liberty, and to seek happiness. In other words, each of us has the right to do anything that is peaceful and honest, to acquire property and use it according to our values. Also, we all have the duty to respect the rights of all others to do the same.

People create governments to secure their rights. Thus, government is merely a tool. People and their rights come first. Government has no authority or just power unless granted to it by the people, by the consent of the governed. Those running the government are agents of the people, not their masters.

Each of us has the duty to be vigilant against government abuse of its power, to speak out, to take action to correct such abuses, so that all people might live in abundance and harmony, without fear of government tyranny. That is why we continue to celebrate the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue carried out by Oberlinians 150 years ago who freed a man jai led in Wellington by agents of government for the "crime" of running away from his enslavers. And it is why Oberlinians today are seeking a resolution by city council to prohibit city employees from cooperating with the enforcement of unjust laws.

**Bob Williams
Oberlin**