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# Maine Voices: Support for open borders will be Democrats' undoing in 2020

Voters (and opinion writers for liberal newspapers) oppose free care for illegal immigrants, decriminalizing illegal crossings and other conspicuously bad ideas.

BY JONETTE CHRISTIAN  
SPECIAL TO THE PRESS HERALD

HOLDEN — Following the debates, op-ed writers and staff columnists on liberal editorial pages exploded, imploring the Democrats: Wake up! You're "in [a bubble on](#) immigration"! (Full disclosure: I wrote in Bernie Sanders in 2016.)

In The Washington Post, [Jeh Johnson](#), President Barack Obama's director of homeland security, wrote: "We cannot, as some Democratic candidates for president now propose, publicly embrace a policy to not deport those who enter or remain in this country illegally unless they commit a crime. That is tantamount to declaring publicly that our borders are open to all."

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New York Times columnist [Bret Stephens](#) wrote June 28: “Promising access to health insurance for north of 11 million undocumented immigrants at a time when there’s a migration crisis at the southern border? Every candidate at Thursday’s debate raises a hand for that one, in what was surely the evening’s best moment for the Trump campaign.”

New York magazine commentator [Andrew Sullivan](#) pointed out: “A big majority of the candidates in the Democratic debates also want to remove the grounds for detention at all, by repealing the 1929 law that made illegal entry a criminal offense . . . . And almost all of them said that if illegal immigrants do not commit a crime once they’re in the U.S., they should be allowed to become citizens. How, I ask, is that not practically open borders? . . . I suspect that the Democrats’ new position – everyone in the world can become an American if they walk over the border and never commit a crime – is political suicide.”

Similar warnings emanated from New York Times columnists [David Brooks](#), [Thomas Friedman](#), [Thomas Edsall](#), [Ross Douthat](#) and [Gail Collins](#). And from The Washington Post, [Fareed Zakaria](#) and [Karen Tumulty](#). Even [Hispanic leaders](#) are saying Democrats erred in supporting free health care for illegal migrants.

And the polls? A [July NPR/Marist survey](#) found that just 33 percent of voters think giving free health care to illegal immigrants is a good idea, and only 27 percent believe that decriminalizing illegal border crossings is a good idea.

Democrats used to be immigration hawks. Consider President Bill Clinton's [1995 State of the Union address](#): "All Americans ... are rightfully disturbed by the large numbers of illegal aliens entering our country. The jobs they hold might otherwise be held by citizens or legal immigrants. The public services they use impose burdens on our taxpayers." Strong words, but he didn't deliver.

Since 1995, Democrats have succeeded in playing it both ways: denying support for open borders, but achieving the same results by consistently rewarding illegal immigration, advocating mass legalization schemes, shielding employers, dismantling enforcement operations and [passing laws](#) to prevent cities from collaborating with federal enforcement.

Triggered by President Trump's racism, and confident in their own moral superiority, Democrats have only become more radical, embracing ideas unimaginable even five years ago. Congressional leftists are unwavering in [their support for abolishing Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#) (an idea supported by [43 percent of Democrats](#)). And the Democratic-controlled California Legislature passed a statute [curtailing cooperation with ICE](#). Yet [80 percent](#) of the public answered "yes" to this 2017 Harvard-Harris Poll question: "Should cities that arrest illegal immigrants for crimes be required to turn them over to immigration authorities?" All 10 of [the presidential](#)

[candidates](#) at a recent debate supported free health care for undocumented migrants, something we don't even provide for our own citizens. Is this the game plan to defeat Trump?

Democrats say, "Go after the employers!" and then [unanimously](#) vote against a Republican bill (HR 4760) that called for employer sanctions, universal E-Verify, ending extended family migration, etc. – all of which were part of the highly praised, comprehensive immigration reform [bill of 2013](#), championed by President Obama. Sens. Susan Collins and Angus King [voted in favor of the 2013 bill](#).

Why the opposition to HR 4760? Democrats couldn't swallow Trump's wall. Although the wall is controversial, many current problems might have been ameliorated by other features of this bill, and Dreamers would have been permanently protected from deportation. Too bad for Dreamers. Continued chaos at the border is great political optics for Democrats' moral outrage. But how much longer will the public buy their pretense at compassion?

I shudder at four more years of Trump. But Democrats are courting disaster in 2020 unless they listen to common sense from the liberal news outlets they respect.

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