



Written by [Dale Wilcox](#) on June 23, 2025

## Debunking the 'Jobs Americans Won't Do' Lie in Nebraska

The narrative that illegal aliens are essential to the U.S. economy because they fill jobs Americans refuse to do is a persistent myth, and one that crumbles under scrutiny. The claim has become increasingly difficult to make as the Trump administration fulfills its promise to restore order to our long-dysfunctional immigration system.

A recent [report](#) highlights the clash between propaganda and reality. After an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) enforcement operation at the Glenn Valley Foods meatpacking plant in Nebraska, where 76 employees were detained and removed, the plant saw a flood of job applications from local residents eager to fill the vacancies.



Dale Wilcox  
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This case challenges the tired claim that Americans are unwilling to take on so-called undesirable jobs. The truth is that employers often prefer illegal labor not because Americans refuse to do the work, but because illegal workers can be exploited with low wages and poor conditions. Americans, when offered fair pay and decent working environments, are more than willing to step up.

This surge of job applicants at Glenn Valley Foods undermines the notion that Americans are too lazy or disinterested to take on labor-intensive roles such as meatpacking. These jobs, often grueling and hazardous, are shunned not because of the work itself but because of the exploitative conditions under which they are offered. Illegal aliens, lacking legal status and fearful of deportation, are less likely to demand better wages or safer workplaces, making them attractive to employers looking to cut costs.

This exploitation is at the heart of why some businesses rely on illegal labor. The meatpacking industry, for instance, is notorious for low pay, long hours, and dangerous conditions. A 2016 report by the Government Accountability Office [noted](#) that meat and poultry workers face injury rates significantly higher than the national average for all industries.

Employers know that American workers, empowered by labor laws and the ability to negotiate, are more likely to push back against substandard conditions. Illegal labor benefits employers but depresses wages and working conditions for everyone, including American citizens.

This labor myth is perpetuated by elites who, consciously or not, view illegal aliens as a permanent servant class. Former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi once [mused](#) that America needs migrants to "pick our crops." Her comments implied that certain jobs are beneath Americans, a patronizing assumption that dismisses the work ethic of millions. Similarly, in 2015, Kelly Osbourne, on *The View*, infamously [asked](#), "If you kick every Latino out of this country, who is going to be cleaning your toilet, Donald Trump?" The remark, meant as a critique of immigration policy, instead revealed a condescending worldview that relegates illegal aliens to menial tasks while assuming Americans are too privileged to take them on.



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This narrative is not just misguided — it is highly insulting. The Nebraska plant’s flood of applications included people from diverse backgrounds, all seeking opportunity. To suggest they need illegal aliens to do their jobs is to dismiss their ambition and dignity. It also ignores the economic harm caused by unchecked illegal immigration, which depresses wages for low-skill workers and disproportionately affects minorities.

Another claim meant to normalize illegal labor is that requiring legal status of food processing workers will drive up the cost of fruits, vegetables, and meat products, to name a few. Research has not supported this claim. In 2020, the [Economic Policy Institute](#) found that a 40 percent increase in farm worker pay would raise the cost of agricultural produce by just \$25 per household over a year, which comes to less than seven cents a day. That is a pittance that most Americans would gladly pay for safer communities and better job opportunities.

Employers, however, are not going to quit their addiction to illegal labor voluntarily. That is why e-Verify, the program which ensures that new hires have legal status, should be mandatory for all U.S. employers. Ramping up ICE operations is an important step, but not the only one needed to remedy this problem.

The “jobs Americans won’t do” mantra is also a deliberate tactic of anti-borders activist groups. By framing illegal immigration as an economic necessity, these groups distract from the negative consequences of surrendered borders, including strained public resources and eroded rule of law. They lean on emotional appeals, casting enforcement as cruel, while ignoring how illegal labor markets undermine fair competition for jobs.

The Nebraska case proves that when enforcement creates space for legal workers, Americans step forward. This is not about xenophobia; it is about fairness and respect for the law. Americans are in desperate need of both.

*Dale L. Wilcox is executive director and general counsel for the [Immigration Reform Law Institute](#), a public interest law firm working to defend the rights and interests of the American people from the negative effects of mass migration.*



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