



California City Appoints Two Illegal Aliens to Advisory Boards

Officials in Huntington Park, California, a city of 58,000 people in Los Angeles County, announced on August 3 that they would appoint two illegal aliens as commissioners on city advisory boards.

City councilman Jhonny Pineda said he will appoint Francisco Medina to the Health and Education Commission and Julian Zatarain to the Parks and Recreation Commission. Both men are Mexican nationals who came to this country illegally.



The *Los Angeles Times* reported that Zatarain, who is currently a college student, arrived here from Sinaloa, Mexico, in 2007 when he was 13. He has engaged in community service, such as volunteering for the Red Cross, but has long assumed — quite logically — that because of his illegal status, he could not serve on a city commission.

The *Times* noted that people who are in this country illegally cannot vote or seek elected office, but cited a statement from officials in Huntington Park who said that illegal aliens' status should not stop them from helping govern in other ways. Among those quoted was Huntington Park Mayor Karina Macias, who said:

Our population includes documented and undocumented immigrants, and I wanted to make sure everyone could participate. If we're going to talk about transparency, being open and having a community that's involved, then the conversation also has to include undocumented immigrants. I'm hoping other cities are looking at what we're doing here.

The *Times* reported Macias' statement that the city began accepting new applications for commission posts two months ago, and officials began wondering what would stop them from appointing people who are living in the country illegally.

While the *Times*' statement that "state law does not prohibit people who are in the country illegally from serving as appointed commissioners" may be correct, it ignores a larger point: Federal law *does* prohibit people who are in the country illegally from being in this country at all. 8 U.S.C. Section 1325 (Improper entry by alien), states:

Any alien who (1) enters or attempts to enter the United States at any time or place other than as designated by immigration officers, or (2) eludes examination or inspection by immigration officers, or (3) attempts to enter or obtains entry to the United States by a willfully false or misleading representation or the willful concealment of a material fact, shall, for the first commission of any such offense, be fined under title 18 or imprisoned not more than 6 months, or both, and, for a subsequent commission of any such offense, be fined under title 18, or imprisoned not more than 2 years, or both.

Illegal aliens are also subject to deportation, upon being ordered by an immigration judge. However,



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on August 12, 2015

this procedure, now called “removal,” is not always automatic and subject to what U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement calls “deportability.”

If our immigration law was being enforced, therefore, these two young men, whatever redeeming qualities they might otherwise have, would have been fined, possibly imprisoned, or deported, instead of being appointed to a city commission.

The *Times* reported that Zatarain, who is currently enrolled in Santa Monica Community College, hopes to obtain a law degree some day. Perhaps he should start with learning about U.S. immigration law.

Neil Cavuto, host of *Your World With Neil Cavuto* on the Fox Business Network, told political strategist Joe Lestingi on his August 4 program that since Medina and Zatarain are in this country illegally they should not have legal rights, let alone positions on advisory boards in government. “This is worse than sanctuary cities. Now we’re giving them sanctuary boards,” Cavuto said. “You know this is crazy.”

The *Times* also interviewed former Huntington Park Mayor Ric Loya and asked him if he’s worried about the public perception of the appointment of two immigrants in the United States illegally. He answered:

Donald Trump will have a field day with something like this. You’re going to get people like Trump who are going to be mad, but on the other hand a lot of people who came here legally or illegally, they’re going to say this is great.

Everybody can be involved in government, as long as it’s done legally. I don’t have a problem with it.

Loya did not explain how any involvement with government that an illegal alien had could be considered legal, since their very presence in America is illegal.

City Counciman Pineda told KABC-TV in Los Angeles: “They have been community volunteers for a lot of years. They’ve always given to the community.... They just happen to be undocumented.”

The casualness with which Pineda views these aliens illegal immigration status may stem from the common use of the euphemism “undocumented” in place of illegal. (Labels can have an impact, as we shall see in another article about California Governor Jerry Brown having signed a law on August 10 that bans the word “alien” from the state’s labor laws.)

The young men may have the best of intentions when it comes to community service, but they must also learn respect for our rule of law and do what is necessary to obtain legal status before becoming permanently involved in the community.

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