Border: continued from previous page

in the paper soon talking about how there has been too much immigration of Asians and Latinos, and how this is bad for the country."

Unfortunately, as the rapid rise of ex-Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke indicates, when times are hard people are all too willing to embrace racist solutions, and there will be no shortage of politicians willing to play to those prejudices. California govenor Pete Wilson, for example, just announced that a huge projected budget deficit was due to "illegal immigrants" burdening the welfare system and the schools. In the case of the border with Mexico, the metal wall might not do much to actually stop the flow of immigrants, but it does give the impression that the official U.S. policy is that Mexicans have to be kept out, at whatever cost.

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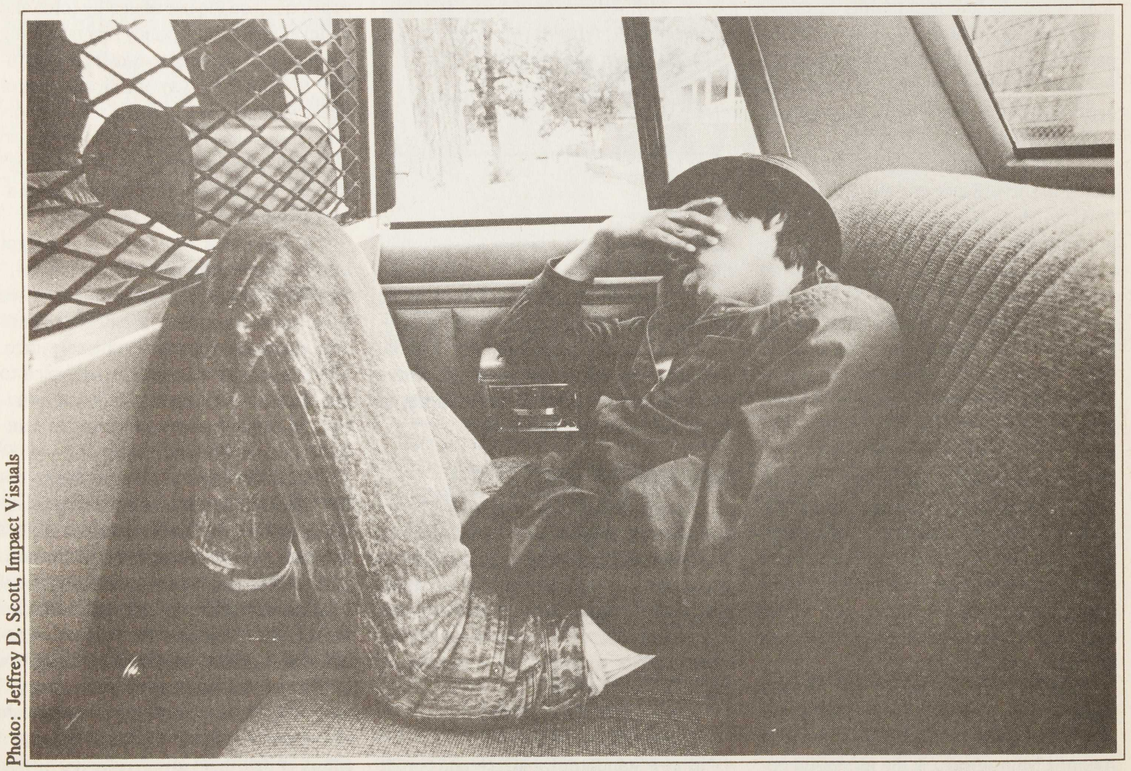

Photo: Jeffrey D. Scott, Impact Visuals

A Mexican who crossed the U.S. southern border without documentation sits in the back of a Border Patrol cruiser after being picked up in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Highlights of 1990 Immigration Bill

General Provisions

➲ Overall cap of 700,000 visas for legal immigrants from about 500,000. After three years, cap falls to 675,000.

➲ 40,000 visas for "priority workers," or aliens with "extraordinary ability" in arts, sciences, education, business or athletics.

➲ 40,000 visas for aliens with advanced degrees or "exceptional ability."

➲ 40,000 visas for other skilled workers, such as professionals holding basic degrees.

➲ 10,000 visas for investors meeting certain economic criteria, i.e. willing to invest one million dollars in an enterprise that creates at least ten jobs.

➲ 40,000 visas for three years for aliens from 35 countries with low immigration in recent decades. At least 40% must come from Ireland.

➲ 55,000 visas, in late 1995, for "diversity" immigrants from countries with low immigration in recent decades. Generally requires a high school education or two years of specific work experience.

➲ Salvadorans in the U.S. by Sept. 19, 1990, receive temporary "safe haven" status for 18 months and work authorization.

"Diversity Visas"

Also known as the lottery because of the way it is administered, this category was created "primarily to benefit Europeans" according to an immigration lawyer. It offers special preference to countries "historically discriminated against." Ireland gets 40% of the visas.

These countries are:
Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bermuda, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Britain, Guadeloupe, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, New Caledonia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, San Marino, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia.

Family Sponsorship

Establishes an overall cap on immigration, of 700,000 annually from 1992 to 1994, and 675,000 thereafter.

Within that limitation, family immigration is allocated 465,000 visas annually through 1994, and 480,000 thereafter.

Family Preference

➲ 23,400 for unmarried sons and daughters of U.S. citizens.

➲ 114,200 visas as a minimum for spouses and children of permanent residents. For spouses and minor children of residents, 75% of the visas are not subject to per-country limits.

➲ 23,400 visas for married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens.

➲ 65,000 visas for brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens.

Visas for legalized immigrants' relatives — 55,000 visas per year for three years specifically for newly legalized immigrants to reunite with spouses and children. These families are also eligible for visas under the category that includes spouses, sons and daughters of permanent residents.

Family Unity

Formalizes provisions to protect against deportation and provides work authorization for spouses and unmarried children of immigrants newly legalized under the amnesty program and the agricultural workers program. These relatives will have to show that they were in the United States before May 5, 1988.

Application Extension

Provides a 12-month extension of the 30-month application period for the Second Phase of the amnesty program. It especially helps thousands of legalized immigrants who have missed their Second Phase deadlines, risking return to undocumented status.

Naturalization

A waiver of the English-language requirement for becoming a U.S. citizen is expanded to include people over 50 who have lived lawfully in this country for at least 20 years and people over 55 who have resided lawfully here at least 15 years.

Sources: National Council of La Raza; National Immigration Law Center