



An Open Letter to the Candidates for Lieutenant Governor of Texas

Dear Candidates for the Office of Lt. Governor,

I want to begin by thanking you for your service to the Great State of Texas. Each of you has given tremendously of yourselves and has sacrificed time with family and friends in the pursuit of making our state a better place to raise our families.

Now, as you seek the office of Lt. Governor, I am hopeful that the decisions made by our fellow Texans are based on a studied review of your records, a fresh insight into your governing philosophies and a genuine understanding of the compassion for others that resides in your hearts. Therefore, it was with great anticipation that I sat down to watch your recent televised debate.

The debate started at 8:00 p.m. My newest little one, only a few weeks old, was due for a feeding so he stayed up to watch with me. As with all proud Papas, I spend a lot of time dreaming about my children's futures. What will their world be like? Will they inherit the same Texas opportunities that I have been blessed with? I want the best for them. And like you, I love my babies more than I have ever loved anything in my entire life.

I thought the debate was fair and even. Each of you had points to make, and you made them well. But as the night went on, I became increasingly troubled by the tone taken by all of you on one of the most important and complex issues facing Texas today: illegal immigration. While I recognize that I am but one voice and do not speak for all Republicans, as a Hispanic Republican elected official of Mexican descent, I have a unique perspective on this issue that can provide an insight that you might not otherwise receive.

Please know that like you, I am a principled conservative who believes in and supports the rule of law. I do not believe that we should reward those who violate our Nation's laws and like most conservatives, I am adamantly opposed to amnesty. As well, it is clear to me that border security should be a critical component of any long term solution.

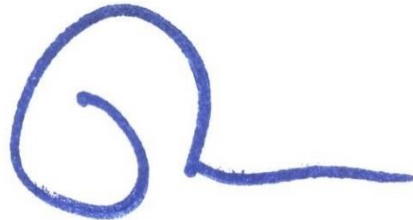
However, other than your singular focus on border security and a passing reference to supporting a guest worker plan, you provided no specifics about how we might address the unauthorized population in our state. Nor did I hear any proposals on how we might better cooperate with the Federal authorities so that we can assist in the enforcement of existing laws, which you seemed to agree, were sufficient to address many of our concerns.

Most disconcerting to me was the tenor of your remarks. I heard fellow human beings referred to dismissively as “illegals.” I heard that we must “stop the invasion,” comparing those seeking the promise of our great country with war-mongering foreign adversaries. I heard statistics about crime committed by the undocumented, but heard nothing of the economic benefits recognized by the state’s agriculture, oil and gas and construction industries.

Friends, these “illegals” are people. They are human beings who love their little ones just as much as you and I love our little ones. They want a better life for their families and they want their children to have a better life than they have had. No, this does not mean you have to abandon your conservative principles and support open-borders amnesty or reward those who have broken our laws. But it does mean that you should take just a moment to acknowledge the humanity of a hard-working and productive people. Respect them. Engage them. Understand them. And when you articulate your positions about these issues, always remember that you are talking to and about people.

I plead with you gentlemen. Please try to find a way to address this very serious problem with compassion, understanding and the knowledge that undocumented Mamas and Papas dream about their children’s futures just like we do.

Sincerest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a horizontal line.

Jason Villalba
Texas State Representative
House District 114