

CITY COUNCIL SPEECH BY MAYOR LOU BARLETTA JULY 13, 2006

THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING TONIGHT.

AS I DID AT THE LAST MEETING, I ASK THAT OUR DISCUSSION BE SERIOUS AND SINCERE, BUT RESPECTFUL AND POLITE.

NOTHING GOOD WILL COME FROM VICIOUS AND PERSONAL ATTACKS, AND THEY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

ABOUT A MONTH AGO, I PROPOSED THE ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION RELIEF ACT.

SINCE THEN, MY OFFICE HAS RECEIVED MORE THAN 8,000 EMAILS SUPPORTING THE MEASURE.

WE HAVE RECEIVED OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE RESPONSES FROM LITERALLY EVERY STATE IN THE UNION, FROM MAIN TO HAWAII AND ALASKA.

BUT WE DON'T HAVE TO LOOK FAR TO SEE SOME OF OUR MOST VOCAL SUPPORT.

GRANT STREET, LOCUST STREET, LAUREL STREET, ARTHUR STREET,

FULTON COURT, BERNER AVENUE, SOUTH PINE STREET, BIRCH STREET, CHURCH STREET, NINETEENTH STREET, SEVENTH STREET, DIAMOND AVENUE....

WE RECEIVED HUNDREDS OF LETTERS OF SUPPORT FROM EVERY SECTION OF THE CITY.

ONE PERSON WROTE, ' I HAVE LIVED IN THIS CITY ALL MY LIFE AND HAVE ALWAYS LOVED THE CITY OF HAZLETON. NEVER HAVE I BEEN SO PROUD....'

ANOTHER FAMILY WROTE, 'JUST WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW HOW VERY PROUD WE ARE OF EVERYTHING YOU ARE DOING TO KEEP US SAFE AND CHANGE OUR CITY. WE WERE GOING TO SELL OUR HOUSE, BUT NOW WE HAVE RECONSIDERED.

WE HAVE ALSO HEARD FROM FORMER RESIDENTS, SOME OF WHOM HAVE HEARTBREAKING STORIES TO TELL.

‘I SPENT SEVEN YEARS IN HAZLETON AND SAW WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO HAZLETON WAS WHAT I HAD ALREADY WITNESSED HAPPENING IN MY HOMETOWN, READING, PENNA.’,

A WOMAN WROTE - FIVE YEARS AGO, I CAME TO SUGARLOAF, JUST TO GET AWAY FROM THE MANY FACETS OF ANOTHER DETERIORATING CITY. I DO THINK YOU ARE CATCHING HAZLETON IN TIME TO SAVE THE CITY.’

A COUPLE WROTE, ‘MY WIFE AND I USED TO DO MOST OF OUR BUSINESS THERE. HOWEVER, OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS OR SO, WE HAVE SINCE RETREATED FROM YOUR ONCE SAFE CITY.

A MAN FROM SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA, WROTE THAT HE GRADUATED FROM HAZLETON AREA HIGH SCHOOL IN 1994. HE WROTE THAT HE IS CONSIDERING MOVING BACK TO THE AREA, ADDING ‘HAZLETON WAS A NICE PLACE FOR ME TO GROW UP, AND I WOULD LIKE IT TO BE JUST AS NICE FOR MY SON TO GROW UP THERE.’

FOR THE RECORD, WE HAVE RECEIVED EXACTLY one -ONE- NEGATIVE RESPONSE FROM A LOCAL RESIDENT.

BUT I COULD READ HUNDREDS OF STORIES FROM RESIDENTS, FORMER RESIDENTS, AND PEOPLE ACROSS AMERICA WHO HAVE SEEN ILLEGAL ALIENS DESTROY THEIR TOWNS AND THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE.

AS THE MAYOR, I SEE HOW ILLEGAL ALIENS ARE SAPPING OUR CITY RESOURCES.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

SINCE OUR LAST MEETING, WE HAVE MADE SOME CHANGES TO THE PROPOSAL THAT STRENGTHENS BOTH THE ORDINANCE AND THE CITY’S POSITION.

FOR INSTANCE, LANDLORDS WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO CHECK ALL DOCUMENTATION FROM POTENTIAL TENANTS.

INSTEAD, THEY WILL ONLY HAVE TO CHECK FOR ONE PERMIT: AN OCCUPANCY PERMIT FROM THE CITY OF HAZLETON.

TENANTS AND POTENTIAL TENANTS MUST COME TO CITY HALL AND APPLY FOR THESE PERMITS.

AFTER DOCUMENTATION IS CHECKED, A PERMIT WILL BE ISSUED, AND THESE LEGAL RESIDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO MOVE INTO A LANDLORD'S PROPERTY.

IF THE TENANT IS FOUND TO HAVE PROVIDED FALSE DOCUMENTATION TO THE CITY, LANDLORDS WILL NOT BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE.

IN EXCHANGE FOR THIS PROVISION, THE CITY IS IMPOSING TWO MEASURES.

FIRST, WE ARE IMPOSING A FEE FOR THESE OCCUPANCY PERMITS.

SECOND, LANDLORDS CAUGHT KNOWINGLY RENTING TO THOSE WITH NO PERMIT OR FALSE DOCUMENTATION OF ANY KIND WILL BE FINED \$1,000 PER ILLEGAL TENANT PER DAY.

BUSINESSES WHO KNOWINGLY HIRE ILLEGAL

IMMIGRANTS WILL LOSE CITY BUSINESS FOR FIVE YEARS AFTER THEIR FIRST OFFENSE, AND FOR 10 YEARS FOLLOWING THEIR SECOND.

AGAIN, LET ME STRESS THAT THIS ORDINANCE DOES NOT TARGET ANY PARTICULAR RACE. IF YOU READ IT, YOU WILL NOT FIND ANY REFERENCE TO SPECIFIC RACES, NOR WILL YOU FIND ANY REFERENCE TO ANY LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH.

OVER THE PAST MONTH OR SO, WE HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF BEING RACIST, INTOLERANT, AND UNFAIR.

**BUT LET ME REPEAT WHAT I HAVE BEEN SAYING ALL ALONG.....
ILLEGAL IS ILLEGAL!**

WE DO NOT CARE WHERE THEY COME FROM, WE DO NOT CARE WHAT LANGUAGE THEY SPEAK, BUT AN ILLEGAL ALIEN IS NOT WELCOME IN HAZLETON!

THOSE WHO ARE HERE ILLEGALLY CONTINUE TO DRAIN CITY RESOURCES.

THE OTHER DAY, POLICE RESPONDED TO A SIMPLE NOISE COMPLAINT AND FOUND THREE ILLEGAL ALIENS.

THE OFFICERS WHO WENT TO THAT SCENE, WERE TAKEN AWAY FROM OTHER PATROLS.

THOSE THREE YOUNG MEN WERE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE IN THE UNITED STATES TO BEGIN WITH, BUT THE HAZLETON POLICE DEPARTMENT HAD TO SHIFT RESOURCES AWAY FROM OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT DUTIES TO RESPOND TO THAT COMPLAINT.

EARLIER THIS MONTH, CITY POLICE OFFICERS HAD TO PHYSICALLY SUBDUE A MAN WHO LATER CLAIMED HE WAS AN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT.

THIS MAN ALLEGEDLY FOUGHT WITH OUR POLICE AND TRIED TO TAKE THE GUN OUT OF THE HANDS OF ONE OF OUR DETECTIVES.

WE MUST DRAW THE LINE, AND WE ARE DRAWING IT TONIGHT!

ON A PERSONAL NOTE, I HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF NOT ONLY BEING A RACIST, BUT ALSO DOING THIS FOR OTHER REASONS, FOR POLITICAL GAIN, OR TO HELP OTHER ELECTED OFFICIALS.

I AM PERSONALLY OFFENDED BY THOSE ACCUSATIONS, NOT BECAUSE THEY INSULT ME, I AM OFFENDED BECAUSE THEY INSULT THE FAMILY OF DEREK KICHLIN, WHO WAS ALLEGEDLY GUNNED DOWN – MURDERED- BY FOUR ILLEGAL ALIENS.

THEY INSULT THE CHILDREN WHO ARE NO LONGER ALLOWED ON THE PINE STREET PLAYGROUND BECAUSE AN ILLEGAL ALIEN FIRED A GUN THERE.

THEY INSULT THE FATHERS AND MOTHERS, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, SONS AND DAUGHTERS, OF THOSE IN OUR COMMUNITY WHO ARE ADDICTED TO THE DRUGS SOLD BY ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

I AM THE MAYOR OF HAZLETON.

I SWORE AN OATH TO PROTECT THE RESIDENTS OF THIS CITY – THE LEGAL RESIDENTS OF THIS CITY.

WHEN PEOPLE ARE GUNNED DOWN OUTSIDE THEIR HOMES, I CANNOT SIT BY AND WAIT FOR A SOLUTION.

WHEN RESIDENTS ARE AFRAID TO WALK DOWN A CITY STREET, I CANNOT IGNORE THEIR COMPLAINTS.

WHEN CHILDREN – CHILDREN- ARE AFRAID TO GO TO A PLAYGROUND, I MUST ACT.

THERE ARE THOSE IN THE COMMUNITY WHO HAVE ATTEMPTED TO JUSTIFY CRIMINAL CONDUCT. THEY SAY THAT CROSSING THE BORDER WITHOUT PAPERS, OR BUYING SOMEONE ELSE'S IDENTITY, OR OVERSTAYING A TOURIST OR STUDENT VISA IS NOT ILLEGAL.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THERE ARE THOSE WHO ALSO SAY THAT WE HAVE ALWAYS HAD MURDERS OR EVEN MASSACRES – IN HAZLETON, THAT IT IS PART OF OUR LOCAL CULTURE.

THAT A 14 YEAR OLD FIRING A GUN AT A PLAYGROUND IS JUST A KID PLAYING AROUND.

THESE PEOPLE COULD NOT BE MORE WRONG!

WHEN YOU START JUSTIFYING ONE CRIMINAL ACT, IT BECOMES EASIER AND EASIER TO JUSTIFY MORE.

ILLEGAL IS ILLEGAL! PERIOD

AS I TOLD THE SENATE COMMITTEE AND COUNTLESS MEDIA OUTLETS ACROSS THE COUNTRY OVER THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS, HAZLETON IS SMALL TOWN USA. WE ARE AN ALL AMERICAN CITY.

WE ARE A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE SHOULD BE ABLE TO RAISE THEIR FAMILIES FREE OF FEAR.

A CITY WHERE RESIDENTS AND LEGAL IMMIGRANTS CAN LIVE SIDE BY SIDE, COMMUNICATING WITH AND LOOKING OUT FOR EACH OTHER. ONE COMMUNITY OF LEGAL, HARDWORKING, LAW ABIDING TAXPAYING CITIZENS.