

Foreign Welders Got Booted Out of Texas

Posted By [Rob Sanchez](#) On 9 April 2010 @ 2:18 In [General](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)

A dozen Italian and Slovakian welders that were working on the Trinity River bridge construction project got booted out of Texas — or more accurately they were not allowed to come back. Four workers employed by Italian steel fabricator Cimolai got to stay in the U.S. to continue working.

In addition to the following new article on this story, be sure to watch the video report because it is better than the text version: [Feds: Foreigners shouldn't be building Dallas bridge](#), by Byron Harris, WFAA-TV, April 7, 2010.

The events that transpired since last year can read by using the following links to my **excellent and informative** articles:

[Italian Welders Work On Dallas Bridge—Texans Remain Jobless](#), 11/23/2009
[Italian Welders Denied Entry to U.S.](#), 2/7/2010
[WFAA's Byron Harris On Immigration](#), 2/7/2010

This story has a happy ending: most of the foreign workers were deemed to have illegal visas, which means that Cimolai will have no choice but to hire Texan welders to get the job done. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) determined that the foreign welders should have been using [H-2B instead of B-1 visas](#) in order to hold these jobs in the U.S. [NOTE: In my first article about the Trinity River bridge project (November 2009) I explained why using B-1 for these jobs is illegal but it took ICE until now to come to the same conclusion. **Duh!**]

Actually the only thing new since the welders were not allowed back into the U.S. in early February is that ICE made an official declaration that the workers were in the U.S. illegally. None of this would have happened if it wasn't for the persistent investigative reporting from journalist Byron Harris of Dallas, Texas at WFAA-TV, so be sure to thank him [Email him](#). Let's give a tip of our ten gallon hats to Harris and his [brave editors](#) at the TV station because without their reporting this story would have never seen the light of day!

It's not clear that even a single one of the illegal workers were deported because the only ones that aren't working are the ones who left the U.S. for Christmas vacations. Four of them are still in the U.S. and gainfully employed by Cimolai. Unless ICE apprehends and deports them they will continue to work while jobless Texans enjoy vacations at their own expense.

The Byron Harris article suggests that in addition to ICE, the DOL is doing an investigation:

The U.S. Department of Labor is also investigating whether the foreign workers are due additional pay for overtime and wage differentials. The men were paid in their home country and did not pay U.S. taxes. U.S law requires that they be paid the prevailing wage, which is \$13 an hour.

"What's so sad is they're [the foreigners] getting the back wages," said Mike Cunningham of the Texas Building Trades Council. "American workers could have been making all of this money."

I scoured the internet for a press release by ICE or the DOL about the investigation but at the time of this writing haven't been able to find one. If these gov agencies are doing something they are keeping it a well hidden secret. That's not typical of either of these agencies because in high profile cases they are usually quick to publish press releases. What's going on with that?

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Mike Cunningham's quote is excellent and proves Lesson #3 below. It would seem that the union would be anxious to brag about their newfound victory over cheap foreign labor, but the last time the [Texas Building Trades Council](#) happened to [mention the fiasco](#) at the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge Project in Dallas was on February 12, 2010.

Why is everyone but Bryon Harris and Mike Cunningham so darn quiet on this major news event?

There are a few lessons that can be learned from the Trinity Bridge incident:

1. All illegal aliens and visa violators should learn that once they sneak into the U.S. they are home free. They should never cross the border for any reason because there is no guarantee they will be let back in. As long as they hold jobs and keep their nose clean they have nothing to worry about from ICE.
2. Anytime illegal aliens are underpaid they can expect the full force of the U.S. government to make sure they get back-pay from their exploitative employer. On the other hand, the Americans that got overlooked for the job position should never expect so much as a crumb in compensation for the time they lost while sitting on the bench.
3. The U.S. government will do everything it can to protect the rights of illegal aliens. In contrast, U.S. citizens are on their own to compete in the global economy and should never expect help from their own government — especially if it involves the enforcement of immigration laws!

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