



World Opinion Roundup

By Jefferson Morley

A Daily Survey of What the International Online Media Are Saying

Defense of Migrants Unites Mexican Media

The United States may be divided on the illegal immigration issue, but Mexico is not.

In fact, the issues that sharply split U.S. public opinion don't provoke much debate at all in the country that supplies most of the immigrants. Just as U.S. commentators seldom discuss how immigration reform might affect the life of ordinary Mexicans, Mexican commentators express little concern about how illegal immigration affects American security or jobs. The debate has not figured in Mexico's ongoing presidential election, either. The three leading candidates blast each other on a host of issues -- but not on the subject of Mexicans living north of the border.

But while the issue is not divisive for Mexicans, it remains important. The Mexican online media does display a broad consensus that Mexicans in the United States, illegal or not, contribute to the well-being of both countries and deserve better treatment. The U.S. immigration debate has been front and center in Mexican coverage for months. When the House passed a bill in December calling for a permanent barrier along the border, Mexican commentators [sounded the alarm.](#)

Those concerns have given way in the past week to optimism, thanks to pro-immigrant demonstrations in Los Angeles and other U.S. cities and Senate approval of more moderate legislation

sponsored by Sens. **John McCain** (R.-Ariz.) and **Ted Kennedy** (D. Mass.).

On Wednesday, the center-right daily **Cronica de Hoy** (in Spanish) gave its daily "Arriba" ('Thumbs Up') award to **Larry Rubin**, director of the American Chamber of Commerce in Mexico. Speaking on behalf of 2,100 companies doing business in Mexico, Rubin endorsed the McCain-Kennedy bill as ["intelligent"](#) immigration reform.

Gabriel Székely, a columnist for the centrist daily **El Universal** (in Spanish), welcomed the rallies of U.S. immigrants as [long overdue](#).

The demonstrators "took to the streets to massively demonstrate to make themselves heard and to defend themselves from a society that fears and distrusts them," he wrote. Székely expressed hope that the protests might signal the emergence of an immigrant rights movement comparable to the U.S. civil rights movement.

The lead editorial in the leftist **La Jornada** (in Spanish) proclaimed "[The Hour of the Migrant](#)."

"For the first time in history, the political initiative in the United States has been taken by Latin American workers, the majority of them Mexican. Countless struggles and organizational forces over many decades have crystallized in a movement without precedent, peaceful but contentious, that mixes nationalities and diverse occupations brought together by the same circumstances: that of being victims of an immigration system that treats as criminal those who have committed no crimes and the vast majority of whom came from a neighboring country in search of work and

who have provided incalculable benefits to the economy and culture."

It's a sharp change in mood from December, when the House of Representatives approved a bill sponsored by **Rep. James Sensenbrenner** (R-Wis.) that would build a 700-mile long fence along the U.S-Mexican border to keep out illegal immigrants and impose criminal penalties on those who assist them.

Back then, the idea of a wall between the two countries [inflamed pundits](#) and inspired [caustic imagery](#) from cartoonists

For now, it seems, Mexicans see the U.S. politics of immigration going their way.