**POLITICAL SPEECH: IMMIGRATION**

**FOR**

**CLYDE ELROD**

Hello, I hope you are having a wonderful day. My name is Clyde Elrod and I am running for Congress in Georgia’s 10th District in 2020. Today I want to talk about immigration as well as a bit about illegal immigration. We live in a nation built on the hard work, foundations, and principles established by generations of people that came before us. From the Pilgrims to the first settlers in Jamestown in the early 1600’s, this country was established, step by step, by the hard work and dedication of people that came here from somewhere else, looking to establish and maintain an acceptable quality of life.

Throughout our history, we have welcomed people of all races and creeds, and no matter where they came from, if people were willing to work hard, pay their way, and build a greater, more understanding, diverse United States, they were... and are... welcome. In the late 1880’s, a gift was presented from France, placed at the entrance to New York Harbor. Originally known as “Liberty Enlightening the World,” the Statue of Liberty became, and still is, a symbol of just that... a welcome sign and a comfort to let everyone know that they have arrived to a place that is accepting of others. On the statue, there is a poem by Emma Lazarus. It is called “The new Colossus.” Her words need to be heard today:

“.... Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand

A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame

Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name

Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand

Glows **world-wide welcome**;...Give me your tired, your poor,

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me.”

In some way or another, we are all immigrants. Whether we came from this country or not. Whether we were born in a community and moved to a different town... city... state... whether we went to a different place to study in college or to move for work, in some way, each one of us is displaced. ... But we have one thing in common... we are here to establish a meaningful way of life... to work hard... to raise our families... and to live and honor the “American Dream.” Any myths, rumors, falsehoods or wrong information is just that. We owe it to ourselves and our neighbors to do research and to ask questions about subjects we may not know. Immigration is one of those topics on everyone’s mind lately. We have to learn about it as a community and act sensibly in order to continue to maintain the standards of tolerance established by those who preceded us.

Let’s be honest. We can’t send everyone back. The costs would be too great and the process would be very messy. What I would like to propose is that we nationalize everyone who is working and include their immediate family. All those who are illegal immigrants who are criminals should be sent back. Now I do not want to just nationalize illegal immigrants. Those illegal immigrants will be apart of a higher tax bracket for eight years in order to compensate for the illegal entry. This will, I believe, solve an issue a lot of people have brought up to me... being tired of paying for the illegal immigrants. Now during this time they will have a year to declare themselves and go through the process. Anyone who comes in during or after this time will be deported. This is only for those who have a working background, including their immediate family.

The other part to this conversation is that we need to update our immigration policy. It is confusing and takes forever. It can take a person up to twelve years to become an official citizen. Also if you have an existing disease, you are given a slip to report to a health department once in the US. Let’s make the application available online. File all paper and background checks online. Then have an interview and health check up. During the health check up, give the necessary immunizations and treatment before coming into the country. This process shouldn’t take more than a year. We keep the limit on the amount of immigrants that we have. With this updated process there should be a reduction on illegal immigration and we can more easily keep track as new immigrants attempt to enter the country.

Together, with your support, we can work to address issues like these so that we have a government that represents all of us. Thank you!!