

Civil society should treat all people humanely

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By Angeles Ortega-Moore

Reading about China's challenges as the country passed a new labor law made me realize why the immigration debate in Washington came to a halt in June.

Many of China's international customers were opposing the new changes, which included worker protection, bargaining power and contracts, among other improvements.

These changes would allegedly reduce China's appeal as a low-wage, business friendly industrial base.

Similar to China's labor debate is our debate on immigration.

It seems to be a discussion about "things", and not necessarily human beings, a model that plays out here in North Carolina.

I remember when the Latino population began to grow in our state and people were excited.

They welcomed this community with open arms, and viewed its "work ethic" as one of the most admired traits in this "new" community.

However, challenges seem to have arisen upon the realization that Latinos are more than workers; they're people, too -- people who have social, medical, educational and other needs, as we all do.

Our state is a beneficiary of the labor of the Latino community, and its quality of life is positively impacted by that labor daily.

And daily we are faced with integrating Latinos into our state beyond the single dimension of economic reward, to the multi-dimensions of full citizenship.

Federal policy leaves a lot to be desired as it relates to integrating immigrants into our communities.

Our right to take China, or any country, to task on its human-rights policies and practices does not preclude us from always striving to raise the standards of our own.

We are blessed to be in North Carolina: Our state has so many wonderful features -- top universities, fertile land, major financial institutions, great arts and culture.

We are capable of leading and teaching the country and the world effective solutions for creating a civil society in which all people can humanely exist.

To leave things like they are is like trying to solve a 21st-Century problem with a 14th-Century solution.

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