

WILLIAM REILLY

Chairman of the Climate Works foundation

Jean-Pierre Elkabbach, President, Lagardère News

By the way, we heard you talk about all your educational efforts in Mexico. We know efforts need to be made against poverty, social inequality, etc. Nearly 12 million Mexicans go to "Mr. Reilly's", and Mr. Reilly, immigration has become a major problem for the United States. Is more law and order the right solution for you? With a Democrat like Obama, do you believe the solution is to spend more money to pay for security forces along the border and build a wall? If you don't mind, I'd be interested in hearing your response.

William Reilly

There are some different attitudes towards migration in the United States, particularly illegal migration. By and large, where I come from, in Northern California, it is recognised that a hugely important part of our economy is maintained not just by immigrants, but by illegal immigrants. I heard the Sheriff of one of our counties say this. This includes the tourist business, the restaurant business, agriculture and vineyards. A very large part of our economy is sustained that way.

Obviously, it is true, because we have got something like 12 million people in the country who have that status. I think the Obama administration will try to deal with that constructively and I hope that they will get some help to do it. George W Bush tried to, with a very constructive measure which I thought was progressive, but his own party deserted him on it. Those are tense issues, particularly at a time when unemployment is at a historically-unprecedented level of 9.6% in the United States. These tensions are likely to be with us, but one can only hope that we will deal with it. I can say that practically speaking, a great many of these people, who are undocumented, do in fact have jobs and contribute very productively to the economy.