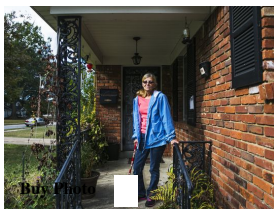


# Hope and fear in Berclair

[Daniel Connolly](mailto:daniel.connolly@commercialappeal.com), daniel.connolly@commercialappeal.com 4:40 p.m. CST November 18, 2016



(Photo: Yalonda M. James/The Commercial Appeal)

For one white woman facing severe economic times, the election of Donald Trump means hope. For one Hispanic woman living on the same street in the Berclair neighborhood, Trump's election means fear.

The story of these two women illustrates how real hardship helped drive some working-class white voters to Trump — and how those votes for an anti-immigration candidate may lead to deportations of their neighbors.

On her front porch on a recent morning, Dianne Austin, a 63-year-old with a cane, chatted with the man with the badge who'd come to cut off her electricity.

Austin, a retired manager of a tire store, said she and her husband are disabled and live on fixed incomes. She said her husband landed in the hospital this year, and with his prescription drug insurance lapsed, they can't pay bills. After her electricity was cut off, someone she knows found a way to reconnect it. The man with the badge came to turn it back off.

With the utility man still working at the house, Austin said she voted for Trump and stayed up until 3 a.m. watching the election results. "And we put on Facebook to everybody. 'Get out and vote! Get out and vote!'" She hopes the president-elect can help people like her. "We feel like if anybody can shake it up and turn it around, Trump can."

With the electricity off, she worried her husband's insulin in the refrigerator would go bad.

In the meantime, she's looking for help everywhere she can get it — food stamps, charities. She said in many cases, though, she earns slightly too much to qualify. "I've thought about calling Steve Cohen because he's always been so good to help people," she said, referring to the Memphis Congressman, a liberal Democrat. "But I don't have his number."

Her Berclair neighborhood is a working-class area in northeast Memphis that once had segregated, all-white schools. Today, the population is mixed: African-Americans, whites and Hispanic immigrants, many of them from Mexico. Hispanic children make up the majority in some neighborhood schools — over 70 percent at nearby Wells Station Elementary.

"I go down to the grocery store, and you see the Hispanics down there," Austin said. "They've got a basket full of groceries and a basket full of beer. They pay for their groceries with the food stamps. They pay for the beer with this big wad of cash," she said.

"If they were all like my neighbor right there, they'd be awesome," she said, pointing to a nearby house. "He's Hispanic and that man works from sunup to sundown and takes care of his kids."

Her granddaughter is close friends with one of the man's daughters. She said she used to mow the man's lawn. She's friendly with the man's wife, though they can't communicate because the other woman doesn't speak English. "If my little grandbaby outgrows something, I take it over there to give it to her youngest one."



Trump supporter Dianne Austin, 63, stands on her porch while holding boxes of her husband's insulin on Friday, Nov. 11, 2016. (Photo: Yalonda M. James/ The Commercial Appeal)

The Hispanic neighbor whom Austin admires wasn't available for an interview, and his immigration status was unknown.

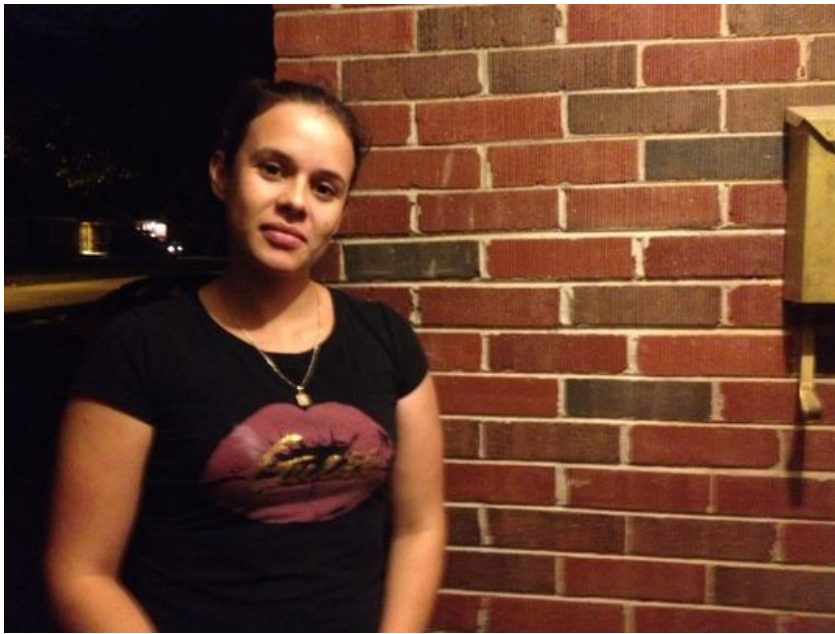
Trump has promised an immigration crackdown, and he will have power to do it (<http://usat.ly/2fRErIW>). Any such action would likely affect families that live in Dianne Austin's neighborhood. A significant number of adult immigrants in Memphis either entered illegally or overstayed visas. Many of these immigrants own houses and have U.S.-born children.

Nationwide, businesses have historically lobbied for a low-cost work force, and for decades, the federal government under both Republican and Democratic presidents has allowed unauthorized immigrants to live more or less openly, but with limited rights.

As of 2014, unauthorized immigrants had lived in the U.S. for a median of nearly 14 years, according to Pew Hispanic Center research. (<http://www.pewhispanic.org/2016/09/20/overall-number-of-u-s-unauthorized-immigrants-holds-steady-since-2009/>)

Austin says unauthorized immigrants shouldn't live here. "You know, I'm not prejudiced to black, any race. But let's be fair to the American people first. ... If we were in their country illegally, they'd deport us. So what's the difference?"

Down the street, 26-year-old Adriana Hernandez said immigrants are scared. "They all think that they're gonna get deported. And you know, they have kids that are born here."



**Adriana Hernandez stands on the front porch of the house in Berclair she shares with her husband and three children on Friday, Nov. 11, 2016. A U.S. citizen, she voted for Hillary Clinton and fears what large-scale deportation will mean for immigrant families. (Photo: Daniel Connolly/The Commercial Appeal)**

Those kids are much like her — she was born in California as a child of Mexican immigrants. Her birthplace gave her citizenship and voting rights. She said she voted for Hillary Clinton and that Trump's comments against immigrants turned her off.

Trump opened his campaign in June 2015 by attacking Mexican immigrants in a speech: "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people."

Trump promised mass deportations on the campaign trail. In recent days, he's given mixed signals. Trump told "60 Minutes" his administration would remove up to 3 million immigrants and would target criminals. Some interpreted that as a softening of his immigration position.

The same day the interview aired, Trump named as a top adviser Steve Bannon. That appointment drew severe criticism from organizations including the Anti-Defamation League, a group that fights prejudice against Jews and other minorities. "It is a sad day when a man who presided over the premier website of the 'alt-right' — a loose-knit group of white nationalists and unabashed anti-Semites and racists — is slated to be a senior staff member in the 'people's house,'" the organization wrote.

Bannon told the New York Times ([http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/15/us/politics/stephen-bannon-white-house-trump.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=a-lede-package-region&region=top-news&WT.nav=top-news&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/15/us/politics/stephen-bannon-white-house-trump.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=a-lede-package-region&region=top-news&WT.nav=top-news&_r=0)) his opponents are misstating his views and those of Trump's followers. "It's not that some people on the margins, as in any movement, aren't bad guys — racists, anti-Semites," he said. "But that's irrelevant."

Hernandez, a wife and mother of three who works as an assistant manager at an apartment complex, said her own daughter is scared and asked her what would happen. She told the girl that nothing would change. "I mean, we're gonna stay here. We're gonna wait and see what's gonna happen."

Meanwhile, she's thinking about the shocks that may come next.

"I just can't see people that have been living here in Memphis — not just in Memphis but the whole U.S. for years — and just change their way of living and going to Mexico and start from zero," she said. "All the situation in Mexico is very hard right now. So I hope nothing changes."

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