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Journalists no longer to use 'Illegal immigrant'

by Joshua J. McElwee

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Immigration and the Church

In a linguistic victory for human rights activists, journalists across the country will no longer use the term 'illegal immigrant' to describe someone in the country illegally following a decision Tuesday by the Associated Press to change its style on the matter.

The AP is a multinational news service. It publishes a stylebook yearly that is widely used by news organizations to determine grammar, punctuation, and reporting practices.

"The Stylebook no longer sanctions the term 'illegal immigrant' or the use of 'illegal' to describe a person," the AP said in a blog announcing the move. "Instead, it tells users that 'illegal' should describe only an action, such as living in or immigrating to a country illegally."

The change in AP style follows wide discussion both at the organization and nationally over how to refer to those living in the country illegally.

While many human rights activists prefer the term "undocumented immigrant," the AP said Tuesday that term "is not precise. A person may have plenty of documents, just not the ones required for legal residence."

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