

Real Immigration Reform

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Steve McCullough

The Immigration Reform Bill suffered a well-deserved death on the senate floor because the majority of elected politicians in the senate actually listened to the desires of the American people - those who elected them to their positions in government. Politicians may attempt to impose their views on us but, ultimately, it is the American people who determine public policies. Although proponents of the bill insisted that only a small minority of Americans opposed the bill (a "loud" and "ill-informed" minority), it was the "minority" that, in the end, outnumbered the pro-amnesty senators and sent the legislation down in flames. There were so many opposition telephone calls coming into the White House switchboard that the phone system was overwhelmed and shut down. Fax machines in senators' offices were inundated with reams of incoming faxes opposing the proposed immigration bill. Thousands of emails protesting the amnesty bill flooded the senators' office computers. Those who were attempting to ramrod the bill through congress were apoplectic. Mississippi senator Trent Lott and California senator Dianne Feinstein lamented that "talk radio is running America. We have to deal with that problem". In a true case of twisted logic, Pennsylvania senator Arlen Specter observed that phone calls do not represent the true feelings of the American people and should be ignored. How's that again? Since he doesn't listen to phone calls, Specter must get the views of his constituents through ESP or the Ouija board. Poll after poll showed that only 22 percent of Americans favored the Immigration Reform Bill, yet senate leaders of both political parties and President Bush tried over and over again to push the 700-plus page bill through congress with little scrutiny and limited debate from opponents.

The truth of the matter is that, outside of those who concocted the bill in secrecy, there were few who actually believed the proposed "solutions" would actually work in controlling the borders. American voters want to control our borders and reduce illegal immigration first - before any legislation is passed to legalize twelve to twenty million illegal aliens. Again and again, those pushing the bill stated that the status quo was unacceptable and that the proposed legislation was the only solution to the problem. Americans agree that the status quo *is* unacceptable but most believe that the senate bill would have made a bad situation worse. Americans do not believe that congress is serious about reducing illegal immigration. The only way that politicians can prove that they are serious about enforcing the border and reducing illegal immigration is to actually do it. Actions speak louder than words.

The situation cannot be corrected immediately. It is going to take a number of years and a serious commitment of manpower, financing and resources. However, there are many steps that can be taken right now. Department of Homeland Security Director, Michael Chertoff, lamented after the defeat of the bill that he was now in the position of having to build the 700 mile security fence and hire 5,000 additional border security officers - initiatives that were passed into law last year but not yet implemented. He bemoaned the fact that he now has to actually deport illegal aliens and "tear families apart" (his words). Is this the guy you want to lead the efforts to reinforce homeland security? If Chertoff

does not want to do his job, I suggest that President Bush find someone else who is serious about securing our borders. All I heard from Chertoff during the debate over the bill were reasons why he could not do his job. His department could not get data from the Social Security Administration to enforce existing laws on employers. He could not get the cooperation of state and local law-enforcement agencies to make arrests for violations of existing immigration laws. He did not have the facilities or resources to hold detained illegal aliens. And on and on. Please, no more excuses.

There are several things that should take place right now to secure our borders and reduce illegal immigration. First, enforce exiting immigration laws. Build the border fence, impose employer sanctions on those who hire illegal aliens, add more border security agents, eliminate sanctuary cities and support local law enforcement. Second, if new laws are required to get government agencies to cooperate with one another, then pass the necessary laws immediately. If the president needs additional authority or resources to enforce current laws, then he should ask for it. Once our political leaders demonstrate that they are serious about enforcing existing laws, then the American people will be more open to legislation to reform our immigration policy. Most Americans realize that we are a nation of immigrants. We are also a nation of laws. We welcome immigrants with open arms when they apply for and are granted citizenship *legally*.

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