Pretending Immigration Isn't An Issue

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The Republican National Committee's mail-order fundraisers often contain a comprehensive multiple-choice survey so that prospective donors can give their opinions on topics of national importance. One issue, however, is conspicuously missing from the list: border security/immigration.
The omission isn't an oversight; it's a deliberate policy. The National Republican Congressional Committee has been advising its candidates NOT to mention this issue in their speeches or campaign literature.

House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt (D-MO) gave Republicans the opportunity to seize this issue when he addressed the radical leftwing Hispanic group, the National Council of La Raza, in Miami on July 22. He announced a Democratic Party plan to introduce legislation to grant amnesty to millions of illegal aliens.

Nothing is more unpopular with the voters than amnesty (which Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV) called "sheer lunacy"). If the powers that be in the Republican Party don't realize this, they are out of touch with the grass roots.

The shyness of the Republican Party and the Bush Administration about immigration explains why they manifest a deafening silence about Rep. George Gekas's (R-PA) bill (H.R. 5013) called Securing America's Future through Enforcement Reform (SAFER). It's completely in accord with public opinion polls showing that the big majority of the American people want government to reduce the number of legal immigrants, to stop the irresponsible issuance of visas, to deport illegal aliens, and to use U.S. troops to guard our borders (instead of the borders of Eastern Europe).

Title I, called Securing the Border, would increase the number of INS investigators and enforcement personnel, lengthen criminal sentences for alien smuggling, beef up the Border Patrol, and use U.S. military troops until the Border Patrol reaches full strength. It would stop granting visas in countries that refuse to cooperate in combating alien smuggling.

Title II, called Screening Aliens Seeking Admission, would tighten up the visa program in order to reduce the risk of aliens using fraudulent passports, require in-person interviews before issuing all visas, and bar any alien who is a member of a terrorist group or supports terrorism. Most people don't understand why this isn't already the law.

Title III, called Tracking Aliens Present in the United States, would establish a comprehensive entry-exit control system with registration and fingerprinting (which INS has promised for years but never implemented). At least 40 percent of illegal aliens (including several 9/11 terrorists) are visa overstayers.

Title IV, called Removing Alien Terrorists, Criminals, and Human Rights Violators , would authorize INS to deport any alien who was inadmissible in the first place or who we have grounds to believe may be a terrorist. This title would reverse several court decisions that accord unreasonable "rights" to terrorists claiming asylum, and would prevent the courts from releasing criminal aliens into the community.

Title V, called Enhancing Enforcement of the Immigration and Nationality Act in the Interior , would protect Social Security cards against counterfeiting and fraudulent use. This title would increase the number of INS investigators, as repeatedly requested by INS, and double the number of INS detention beds.

Title VI would eliminate excessive review and dilatory and abusive tactics by aliens in deportation proceedings. It would also exclude aliens who knowingly make a false asylum application.

Title VII would clean up the problem of voting by illegal aliens. It would require verification of citizenship for voters and applicants.

Title VIII, called Reforming Legal Immigration, would repeal the infamous Diversity Immigrant Program which admits 50,000 immigrants a year, mostly from the Third World including countries that sponsor terrorism, and which helped the Fourth of July LAX murderer win U.S. residency. It would reform the abuses in the refugee program and in the extended-family visa program, and reduce the number of legal immigrants by 20 percent.

This would still leave immigration nearly double the traditional level. INS is unable to cope with its current backlog of five million applications.

Rep. Gekas, chairman of the Immigration Subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee, will start hearings on his bill next month. He should then add one more section to require INS to screen out aliens with diseases such as West Nile virus, malaria, Chagas disease, intestinal parasites, and tuberculosis.

The BBC reported that the current epidemic of West Nile virus (a central African disease) was probably brought to America for the first time three years ago by an imported exotic bird. The Centers for Disease Control reported that 16,000 foreign birds passed unscreened for West Nile virus through JFK airport in 1999. Where are the environmentalists when we need them?