What's Behind a Phone Call from Newt Gingrich

by Phyllis Schlafly *August 3, 2005*

I was sitting at my computer starting to write this week's column when I received a phone call asking me to listen to an important recorded message from our old friend Newt Gingrich. Expecting to get more information about his new alliance with Hillary Clinton to change health care as we know it, I stayed on the line.

But no, Newt was telling me about the danger from illegal aliens coming across our open borders. He talked about the threat this poses to our national security in an era of terrorism, the high costs to U.S. taxpayers, the follies of multiculturalism, and the urgent need for everyone in our country to be able to speak our English language.

The message was skillfully designed to appeal to Americans who are outraged at our government's failure to protect us from the invasion of illegals. But slyly buried in the middle of Newt's message was an endorsement of a "guest worker" plan to invite even more aliens to take U.S. jobs.

The politicians and business executives, who are determined to continue bringing in foreigners to work for lower wages than Americans expect, have gotten smart. The plan to import "willing workers" from other countries is now being packaged in the language of concern about border security.

This strategy is obvious in the new White House-backed coalition called Americans for Border and Economic Security, organized by Republican lobbyist (and former Republican National Committee Chairman) Ed Gillespie. Admission to this coalition costs $50,000 to $250,000, fees that will finance a political-style campaign to sell the American people on a guest-worker program wrapped in a few border-security measures.

This bait-and-switch maneuver is also the approach of the soon-to-be-introduced bill sponsored by Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and John Kyl (R-AZ). It's called the "Comprehensive Enforcement and Immigration Reform Act," and boy is it comprehensive; the advance summary runs a dozen pages of fine print.

The Cornyn-Kyl bill starts off with authorizing 10,000 more Border Patrol Agents. But more agents were congressionally authorized months ago and the Bush Administration refused to add them.

The Cornyn-Kyl bill increases criminal penalties for alien smuggling, document fraud, gang violence, and drug trafficking. But that only applies to criminals who are caught; our Border Patrol is catching less than half of the illegals coming over the border, and we inspect only a tiny percent of the Mexican trucks which NAFTA has forced us to allow on our highways.

What about the incredible costs to U.S. taxpayers of illegal aliens, such as health care at our hospitals, schooling for their children, subsidized housing, Earned Income Tax Credit subsidies, and in-state college tuition rates? The Cornyn-Kyl bill would deny taxpayer benefits only to aliens found to pose a threat to national security (not to those who threaten our pocketbooks).

The comprehensive Cornyn-Kyl bill contains dozens of excellent and necessary proposals that should have been ordered years ago, such as eliminating the Diversity Visa Program.

But buried in the middle of this vast bill is Title V, which creates a "Nonimmigrant Temporary Worker Category." That's the euphemism for giving amnesty to some ten million illegal aliens already in the United States, plus creating "guest worker" status for them and for millions more aliens who will be invited into our country to take U.S. jobs.

Amnesty means a general pardon for offenses against the government. The Cornyn Kyl bill includes no punishment whatsoever for the crimes committed by illegal aliens, by makers and users of fraudulent documents, or by employers who hire the cheap labor.

The Cornyn-Kyl bill would establish a new visa category called "W" that would allow aliens to enter the United States "when there are no available U.S. workers." The bill would require employers to pay "W" aliens the minimum wage but not require the market wage.

In other words, Silicon Valley corporations could advertise in "America's Job Bank" for computer specialists at the U.S. minimum wage, no Americans would apply, and thousands of computer specialists from India and Pakistan would board planes to take the jobs for which, allegedly, "there are no available U.S. workers."

The "W" workers would be allowed to extend their time in the United States up to six years, during which period their family members may come and visit for 30 days at a time. The bill doesn't answer the question of what happens when the "W" worker is visited by his wife, and they have a baby who becomes an "anchor baby," i.e., a U.S. citizen, with all the rights and taxpayer benefits for the baby and all his relatives.

Amnesty, even under the label "guest worker," is highly offensive to the American people. It cannot be made palatable by hiding it in a bill that pretends to be about "enforcement" or "reform" of border security.