# Stealth Amnesty Is Still "Sheer Lunacy"

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Last year's failed attempt to get Congress to grant amnesty to millions of illegal aliens has morphed into stealth amnesty. This devious plan is hidden behind a little card that looks like a California driver's license and goes by a strange foreign name: matricula consular.
Mexican President Vicente Fox has instructed his 47 consulates in the United States to issue these identification cards to Mexicans living illegally in this country, and they are lining up by the thousands to pay $29 to get one. More than a million were issued in 2002, and over a million older matriculas issued prior to 9/11 are still in circulation.

Since no one except an illegal alien would want or need a matricula consular, there must be some reason other than identification for the Mexicans' eagerness to acquire them. Indeed, there is.

The matricula consular is a let's-pretend I.D. designed to be used to access U.S. privileges and benefits to which aliens are not entitled. It's Vicente Fox's plan to circumvent U.S. federal immigration laws by lobbying state and local authorities to grant amnesty in incremental steps.

Simultaneously with the issuing of the matricula consular, Mexican consuls have been aggressively lobbying state and local governments and institutions to accept the card as though it were an American-issued I.D. As a result, 13 states are now accepting matriculas for the purpose of giving driver's licenses to illegal aliens.

Once an illegal alien gets a driver's license, he no longer needs his matricula consular. Eighteen of the 19 hijackers on 9/11 carried a driver's license, presumably the key to boarding the killer planes.

Starting with Wells Fargo and Bank of America, 74 banks now accept matriculas for the purpose of opening a bank account. No doubt the banks are eyeing the profits from remittance fees on the $9.5 billion a year that Mexicans who are employed in the United States send back to Mexico each year.

According to shocking information discovered this week by the Center for Immigration Studies, the U.S. Treasury Department winked at this practice in a sly footnote to its report to Congress (10-22-02) on implementation of the USA PATRIOT Act (which was supposed to guard against identity fraud). Footnote #17 stated, "The proposed regulations do not discourage bank acceptance of the `matricula consular' identity card that is being issued by the Mexican government to immigrants."

At least 800 police departments or cities from Los Angeles to Houston to Georgia to Chicago are now accepting the matricula consular. The card can serve to conceal criminal activity because it makes the police less likely to run background checks, take fingerprints, deport, or search for fraudulent documents.

In her first newsworthy action since becoming House Minority Leader, Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) got the federal building in San Francisco to accept the matricula consular as valid identification to enter the building for purposes formerly reserved to people carrying American- issued I.D. But within a week, on

January 21, the General Services Administration (GSA) suspended recognition of matriculas pending an investigation.

A dozen House members sent a letter to Secretary of State Colin Powell on January 7 stating that the matriculas are issued by the governments of Mexico, and some other Latin American countries for "the express purpose of evading U.S. law." Their letter also charges that "the active lobbying of local and state governments by consuls of foreign countries is a breach of international protocol."

Colorado Governor Bill Owens sent a letter to the Mexican Consulate General asking the Mexican lobbyists to register as foreign agents. After all, U.S. citizens who lobby for a foreign government are required to register.

The U.S. institutions that accept the matricula consular do so on the assumption that it really does identify the bearer, but there is no assurance of that. The consulates don't authenticate the documents presented by the Mexicans, don't do background checks, and have no database network to reject duplicate matriculas to the same person.

The matricula consular facilitates illegal entry and residence in the United States and serves as a coverup for this and other crimes. It is a federal crime under Section 274 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to encourage an illegal alien to remain illegally in the United States.

If our immigration authorities want to locate illegal aliens in the United States, all they have to do is drive a bus up to the lines of people standing outside of the Mexican consulates.

A backlash has set in against this racket of pretending that the matricula consular is a lottery ticket redeemable in benefits available to U.S. citizens. New York City, New York State, and some cities in Michigan, Florida and Arizona have voted not to honor the card.

Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-CO) will introduce legislation this week to deal with the fast growing deceptions caused by use of the matricula consular.