Bush's Plan To Bankrupt Social Security

by Phyllis Schlafly January 17, 2007

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President Bush's secret plan for Social Security has just been released to the public in response to a Freedom of Information lawsuit filed by TREA Senior Citizens League, a million-member seniors advocacy group. For four years, the President carried on an energetic public relations campaign to promote his plan to privatize part of Social Security, but he kept under White House lock and key the "Totalization" agreement his administration secretly made with Mexico in June 2004.

Is that any way to run the government, or to commit billions of taxpayer dollars? Maybe we've been needing Nancy Pelosi to demand "the most honest, most open" government in history.

If and when President Bush personally signs this agreement, it will automatically become law without any congressional action. The law that would have allowed one House of Congress to reject it by a vote within 60 days is generally thought to violate the Supreme Court's 1983 decision in INS v. Chadha, which declared unconstitutional a one-House veto of a President's action.

Senator John Ensign (R-NV) has introduced S.43 to require Totalization agreements to be treated like bilateral trade agreements. His bill would permit a

Totalization agreement to go into effect only if affirmatively passed by both Houses of Congress.

Unless we live in some sort of Bush dictatorship, that's the very least of what Totalization should require. It ought to be considered a treaty and require approval by two-thirds of the Senate.

Totalization is the bureaucratic buzz word for the plan to put millions of illegal Mexican workers into the U.S. Social Security system. They would collect U.S. benefits based on their U.S earnings under false or stolen Social Security numbers plus alleged earnings in Mexico.

American citizens must work ten years to be eligible for Social Security benefits, but the Totalization agreement would allow Mexicans to qualify with only 18 months of work in the United States, and pretend to make up the difference by assuming work in Mexico. It is highly doubtful that the illegal aliens ever paid into a Mexican system for eight and a half years.

It could be "virtual" work or "virtual" payments (just like the "virtual" fence we may have on our southern border, or the "virtual" law that promised to build one). A 2003 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report tactfully refused to comment on "the integrity of Mexico's social security data" and warned that the cost to U.S. taxpayers is "highly uncertain."

The United States has totalization agreements with 21 other countries in order to assure a pension to those few individuals who work in two countries (legally, of course) by "totalizing" their payments into the pension systems of both countries. All existing totalization agreements are with industrialized nations whose retirement systems are on a parity with ours.

Mexican retirement benefits are not remotely equal to U.S. benefits. Americans receive benefits after working for 10 years, but Mexicans have to work 24 years before receiving any benefits.

Mexican workers receive back in retirement only what they actually paid in plus interest, whereas the U.S. Social Security system is skewed to give lower-wage earners benefits greatly in excess of what they and their employers contributed.

Mexico has two different retirement programs, one for public-sector employees, which is draining the national treasury, and one for private-sector workers, which covers only 40 percent of the workforce. Most of the Mexicans who illegally entered the United States previously lived in poverty, where they were unemployed, or worked in the off-the-record economy, or worked for employers who did not pay taxes into a retirement system.

The Bush Totalization plan would put millions of Mexicans onto the rolls of the U.S. Social Security system just as our baby-boom generation retires. The White House won't deny that imposing higher taxes on American workers is "on the table" to deal with the expected shortfall.

The Bush totalization plan would lure even more Mexicans into the United States illegally in the hope of amnesty and eligibility for Social Security benefits for themselves, as well as for their spouses and dependents who may never have lived in the United States.

Totalization is part and parcel of the Council on Foreign Relations five-year plan for the "establishment by 2010 of a North American economic and security community" with a common "outer security perimeter." The 59-page CFR document (which can claim Bush Administration approval because it is posted on a U.S. State Department website) demands that we "implement the Social Security Totalization Agreement negotiated between the United States and Mexico."

Americans should raise a mighty clamor to demand that President Bush NOT sign this billion-dollar ripoff of American taxpayers and senior citizens. Meanwhile, tell your Members of Congress to hurry up and pass the Ensign bill.