Amnesty By Any Other Name

by Phyllis Schlafly Jan. 21, 2004

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When President Bush unveiled his "temporary foreign workers" plan, he got cheers from his carefully selected invitees in the East Room of the White House, but he's getting jeers from everyone else from Rep. Tom Tancredo to Senator Ted Kennedy. We are told the plan was originally sketched by Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda on a napkin at a pre-9/11 dinner with Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice.

The plan looks like it was hastily resurrected so Vicente Fox would "make nice" to President Bush at their January meeting in Mexico. But the Bush plan raises a lot more questions than it answers.

Will all 10 million illegal aliens now in the United States be entitled to get a temporary-worker card? Will the millions who don't apply for a temporary-worker card be deported?

How many times can the temporary-worker card be renewed? Once, twice, twenty times? Since President Bush said, "It will have an end," will the workers be deported when the card expires? Will local authorities cooperate with the Federal Government in arrest and deportation?

Bush promised "financial incentives" for "temporary workers to return permanently to their home countries after their period of work in the United States has expired." Will this become another burden on the U.S. taxpayers?

The dictionary defines amnesty as a general pardon for offenses against the government, and illegal aliens committed crimes by entering the United States illegally and then using fraudulent documents to get a job. The Bush plan excuses them from prosecution and punishment, so isn't amnesty the proper term, or shall we call it stealth amnesty?

The Great Amnesty of 1986 was promised to be a one-time deal, but it proved to be not a deterrent but an invitation to attract more illegal aliens, so we now have four times as many illegals as we did then. Can anyone believe that the Bush amnesty will be any different?

Will those who get temporary-worker cards also get driver's licenses? If so, what kind of I.D. will be acceptable?

Bush's plan includes support for the State Department giveaway package called "totalization," a bureaucratic code word for a plan to make illegal aliens eligible to receive Social Security benefits even though they committed fraud in using a Social Security number or failed to pay into the system for 10 years (40 quarters) as Americans must do. Will illegal aliens who get temporary worker cards be treated better than Americans who fail to comply with SS regulations?

Will the temporary foreign workers be entitled to bring all their relatives into the United States? Will their babies born during their temporary work be called U.S. citizens and be eligible for welfare benefits and the right to bring all their relatives into the U.S.?

Why does anyone pretend we need more U.S. workers when government statistics report that we have nine million unemployed and are in a jobless recovery? Will the temporary-workers plan be just a racket to benefit employers like the H-1B visas, which were based on an alleged labor shortage that never existed and clearly is nonexistent now, but continue to bring in foreign workers to displace Americans?

President Bush said his plan will "match willing foreign workers with willing American employers..." Will we take "willing workers" from Iraq, Iran, Libya and Cuba? Should the U.S. Government run an employment service for the world?

Should American workers be forced to compete with the literally billions of people in foreign countries who are "willing" to work at a small fraction of American wages? If a corporation advertises for software engineers at a salary of $20,000 per year and no Americans apply (because current salaries are up to $100,000), will the corporation be justified in hiring "willing worker" software engineers from India?

The model for a guest-worker program is the German experience, which proved that guest workers are not good guests, bring in many relatives, and create a new subordinate caste of unassimilated foreign workers. Is this the social structure we want in America?

The concept of creating a class of temporary foreign workers is fundamentally immoral, anti-immigrant, and un-American. It gives people who violated our laws preferences over those who obey our laws.

Most of the temporaries will never become U.S. citizens and rise the economic ladder to become part of the middle class like immigrants of previous generations. Instead, the temporaries will remain a permanent subordinate class of people doing menial work whose very presence will depress the wages of all Americans.

The Zogby poll reports that 65% of Americans disagree with amnesty, 58% want to reduce immigration, 60% believe present immigration levels are a "critical threat to the vital interests of the United States," and 68% want to deploy troops to the border to curb illegals.

Bush's action may be popular with corporate donors, but it won't sell on Main Street America. The California recall should have taught the lesson that pandering to illegal aliens is a loser on election day.