The Voters Roared, The Senate Heard

by Phyllis Schlafly July 11, 2007

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Contrary to continuing media propaganda, the 2006 election and the killing of the Senate "comprehensive" immigration bill do NOT prove that anti-amnesty is a loser for Republicans. The Democrats who won in 2006 campaigned with Republican-rhetoric messages calling for border security, and they kept their promises in the decisive cloture vote on June 28.

Republican Senators voted No by a 3-to-1 majority (37 to 12), and they were conspicuously joined by three new Democratic Senators who defeated incumbent Republicans last November after criticizing the failure of our government to stop the flow of illegal aliens across our border. They were Senators Jim Webb (VA), Jon Tester (MT), and Claire McCaskill (MO) who said simply, "I like to keep my word."

The Senate bill, so aggressively lobbied by President Bush and Senator Ted Kennedy, didn't even get a simple majority, much less the 60 votes it needed to proceed to vote on the bill itself. Meanwhile, the House Democrats who won in 2006 after making border-security promises were equally resistant to establishment and media lobbying.

A good example is Rep. Nancy Boyda (D-KS) who pulled off one of the most surprising 2006 upsets against an incumbent Republican. She calls President Bush just plain "wrong" and asserts that "most Americans oppose the Senate's wrong-headed reforms; it's just Kansas common sense."

The pro-amnesty crowd is now engaging in ugly name-calling and blaming its defeat on Talk Radio. In fact, Talk Radio merely gave voice to the grass roots, thereby enabling a "great victory for the American people who demanded to be heard," as Sen. David Vitter (R-LA) said at the post-vote press conference.

Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL), who was out front first with specific objections to the Senate bill, pointed out how phony it was to call the Senate bill "reform." He said it would result in only a 13 percent reduction in the invasion of illegal aliens and would actually double the number of legal immigrants.

The arguments against the details of the bill were so powerful that its advocates were reduced to repeating the mantra "Something is better than nothing." How dumb do the elite think the American people are? The Senate bill was far worse than doing nothing.

In addition to the 700-page bill's costly details and Kennedy-crafted loopholes, objections included the fact that the bill was written by a handful of "Deal Makers" behind closed doors without hearings or the usual committee process, who then limited amendments and debate, and demanded that the bill be passed only hours after the text was made public.

Among the many amendments that the Deal Makers rejected or did not allow to be considered were amendments to prohibit felons from getting Z visas, to require completion of background checks before Z visas are issued, and to ensure that drunk drivers are not given legal status. Republicans found it especially obnoxious that all negotiations had to go through Ted Kennedy, the architect of 40 years of failed immigration policy.

Bush's duplicity about building a fence destroyed his credibility. As Sen. Elizabeth Dole (R-NC) said, the American people "want proof, not promises."

Just before the 2006 election, Bush arranged a photo-op to show himself signing the Secure Fence Act, but since then he has refused to build it. The Senate bill he was lobbying for would have cut in half the 700 miles of fencing called for in the 2006 law he signed.

Bush likes fences for himself and keeps a high fence around the White House. When he met at the Group of Eight (G8) summit in Germany, he was protected by a welded-mesh fence, topped with barbed wire and video cameras, which began in the water and wound its way through the countryside until it ended back in the water.

Bush has just sent 120 of our best-trained Border Guards to Iraq to help the Iraqis with their border enforcement! With much fanfare last year, Bush sent some National Guard troops to our southern border, but they were not allowed to do anything except observe and are now scheduled to be sent to Iraq and Afghanistan.

The voter revolt that killed the Senate bill proves that the American people reject amnesty. Now it's time to terminate George W. Bush's "silent amnesty", under which he has allowed at least 700,000 illegals to come into our country every year of his Administration (a) to take jobs in the underground economy (paying no taxes), or (b) to take jobs using a fake or stolen Social Security number and receive massive social benefits paid for by U.S. taxpayers, or (c) to roam our streets as conduits for illegal drugs or to participate in criminal gangs.