Whatever Happened to Mike Pence?

by Phyllis Schlafly June 28, 2006

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Despite the consistent failure of all guest worker plans (e.g., France), Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN) is peddling a new plan to import foreign workers who really are guests and really do go home. Pence has turned his back on the 88 percent of House Republicans who voted that we must achieve border security first, because we'll be cheated on border security if Congress passes a "comprehensive" bill.

The Pence plan tries to avoid the amnesty label by requiring illegal aliens now in the U.S. to make what he calls "a quick trip across the border" to Mexico or Canada to pick up a new W visa. A foreigner could get a W visa only if a U.S. employer certifies that a job awaits him.

Pence's plan calls for setting up privately financed offices outside the U.S., with the cutesy title Ellis Island Centers, to hand out the new W visas, which he claims would be more efficient than government bureaucracy. Business would, indeed, be more efficient than government in importing more foreign workers.

Having private employment agencies distribute the W visas would put the fox in charge of the chicken coop. Private industry has a built-in incentive to import as much cheap labor as possible.

Pence says that the Ellis Island Centers will be able to match workers with jobs, perform health screening, fingerprinting, and convey information to the FBI and Homeland Security for a background check in "a matter of one week, or less." We'll have to see that to believe it.

What about the millions of illegal aliens in the U.S. today who do not have an employer willing to go on record as guaranteeing a job for a foreigner? These would include the relatives of jobholders, the day laborers, and the millions of illegal aliens working in the U.S. underground cash economy (an estimated 40 percent of the total).

Pence's bill is silent on this and his staff predicts that the free market will provide the answers. Pence told Time Magazine his bill "will require the 12 million illegal aliens to leave."

What about the hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens who are not Mexicans? Illegal aliens will not have to return to their home country, but only appear at an Ellis Island Center anywhere outside the U.S. to pick up their papers. Will Mexico and Canada put out the welcome mat for a mass exodus of illegal aliens from the U.S.?

The Pence plan provides that the guest workers, after living here legally for six years under the protection of a W visa, can choose whether to apply for citizenship or to return home. If guest workers don't apply for citizenship, will Pence hire buses to deport them after they have raised a family and established roots?

Six years is ample time to have a U.S.-born anchor baby, or two or three, which starts family chain migration. Any attempt to deal with the racket of birthright citizenship would linger at least six years in the courts.

The Pence promise that employers would have to offer jobs to Americans first is a sick joke. American engineers and computer techies who lost their jobs to foreigners under the H-1B visa guest-worker racket know that a look-for-Americans-first rule is never enforced and easily evaded.

Pence revealed an amazing open-ended part of his plan in his Wall Street Journal article: "My immigration reform plan does not favor illegal immigrants. Anyone may apply for a guest-worker visa at the new Ellis Island Centers; indeed, the plan may actually work to the advantage of applicants who have never violated our immigration laws, since guest-worker visas will be issued only outside the U.S."

Anyone may apply? From anywhere in the world? And without any limits? Pence wrote, "There will initially be no cap on the number of visas that can be issued."

The Pew Hispanic Center surveyed 120 locations in Mexico and concluded that 49 million Mexicans want to live in the United States if they get the opportunity.

If Pence's "guest worker" plan actually worked, and the guests voluntarily go home after six years, it would mean instituting a system that is immoral and un-American. Inviting foreigners to come to America to do jobs that Americans think they are too good to do creates a subordinate underclass of unassimilated foreign workers, like the serf or peasant classes that exist in corrupt foreign countries such as Mexico.

That's not the kind of economy that made America a great nation. As Theodore Roosevelt warned: "Never under any condition should this nation look at an immigrant as primarily a labor unit."

Pence and others who promote "guest worker" plans have a favorite mantra: "Let the free market solve our economic problems." Americans should realize that a

global, or even a Western Hemisphere free market, means forcing American workers to compete with people who work for 50 cents an hour.

Letting the free market decide our future also requires loss of sovereignty to some kind of multinational government, as the European Union found out. Is the real push behind guest-worker proposals the Bush goal to expand NAFTA into the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, which he signed at Waco last year and reaffirmed at Cancun this year?