Bush's Immigration Speech Is Not Credible

by Phyllis Schlafly May 24, 2006

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If President Bush had given his speech calling for immigration reform five years ago, we would have believed him. Now, after five years of doing nothing to protect our borders, he is not credible.

The problems he eloquently complained about didn't just emerge this year. They all existed when he came into office and throughout five years when he did nothing to correct them.

These problems include the pitiful numbers of our Border Patrol, the millions of illegals smuggled into our country across the desert or in crowded 18-wheelers, the dangerous policy called catch-and-release of OTMs (Other than Mexicans) which he now piously labels "not acceptable," employers permitted to hire illegal aliens with forged documents, and unconscionable burdens imposed on American taxpayers to pay the illegal-alien costs of schools, hospitals, crime, and social benefits.

For five years, Bush and the Republican Party Establishment have treated U.S. citizens who demanded action with stony, indeed, arrogant disdain. So why should we believe Bush now when he suddenly pretends to discover what we have been telling him for five years?

The President's speech repeatedly demands a "comprehensive" immigration bill. He made clear that "comprehensive" includes legalization and the path to citizenship for the 12 million illegals now in this country, plus allowing employers to import an unlimited number of "willing foreign workers" whom he describes as "temporary."

The American people are smart enough to know that the former is amnesty, and the latter is a fiction. There is no such thing as "temporary" guest workers; history proves they never go home.

Bush seems to think that we will be comforted by 6,000 National Guardsmen sent to the southern border for one year -- not to guard the border, but merely to "assist" our Border Patrol. This has the ring of a political photo op.

We currently have 37,000 troops guarding the 151-mile border between North and South Korea, but we have fewer than 12,000 agents to monitor 2,000 miles of our southern border.

In 1986, Congress passed comprehensive immigration reform: amnesty for three million plus promises for border security and sanctions on employers who hired illegal aliens. If we couldn't trust President Reagan to see that the law was faithfully executed, we surely are not going to trust Bush's promises. Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.

Bush bragged in his speech that "we have apprehended and sent home about six million people entering America illegally," but he didn't say how many of those six million were repeats. Maybe a truthful figure would be one million people deported six times, while the number of illegal aliens in the United States increased by five million since Bush became President.

The illegal alien who drove 100 miles an hour on Interstate 485 on the wrong side of the highway, killing a University of North Carolina coed last November, had been returned to Mexico 17 times. Did Bush count him 17 times in his six million figure?

Bush's choice of verbs shows that his promises of border barriers, technology and more agents are nothing but pie in the sky. All the good stuff that he proposed was prefaced by the words "we will"; he never said "we are" doing these things.

Bush said, "To secure the border effectively we must reduce the numbers of people trying to sneak across." That's impossible. The Pew Hispanic Center reports that 46 percent of the population of Mexico would like to live in the United States, and 20 percent would come illegally if they could.

Bush said that "businesses often cannot verify the legal status of their employees." On the contrary, the technology is already in place for employers to verify the legality of Social Security numbers, but only a tiny percentage of employers voluntarily do this, and Bush didn't say anything about making this practice mandatory.

Senator Jeff Sessions, the only one in the Senate facing reality on this issue, says the 614-page so-called "compromise" Senate bill is "breath-takingly unsatisfactory." The new Heritage Foundation study reports that it would import 66 million new legal immigrants over the next 20 years.

All Senate bills would vastly increase our tax burden for entitlements. Half of all adult illegal aliens in the United States have less than a high school education, have high levels of out-of-wedlock births, and are heavy users of taxpayer-paid social benefits.

Bush wants to give U.S. jobs to foreigners so they can rise "from a life of low-paying jobs to a diploma, a career, and a home of their own." He shows no compassion for the millions of American high school dropouts who need entry-level jobs so they can start building a life.

Bush was correct when he said this is the "time of decision." Republicans who want to be elected this November should pass the Sensenbrenner House border-security-only bill without any Bush plans to import more foreigners to take jobs from Americans.