Immigration Sellout, Not Reform

by Phyllis Schlafly May 30, 2007

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The Kennedy-Kyl (K-K) Amnesty bill should be titled An Act to Destroy the Republican Party because it pits President Bush against the majority of the Party that elected him. When Senator Ted Kennedy appeared as the centerpiece of the photo-op announcing it, that told the grassroots all they needed to know about the politics of the deal trumpeted as bipartisan.

The Bush Administration has been tone deaf about how offensive are the words comprehensive and compromise. The American people want border security that we can see with our own eyes on television, and they are ready to defeat and disdain Members of Congress who vote for a package deal that contains amnesty and guest worker proposals.

Despite denials, the K-K bill is amnesty. It will give 12 to 20 million illegal aliens exactly what they want, namely, the legal right to remain in the United States by being immediately given a probationary visa.

The K-K bill increases legal migration by at least 50 percent over the next decade by granting green cards to all the remote relatives who are in the chain migration categories, a number estimated at 750,000 to 900,000 a year (triple the current number of 250,000). Giving green cards to millions of additional relatives ensures

that legal immigration will continue to grow as this larger pool of permanent residents brings in spouses.

The K-K bill will bring into our country at least 400,000 guest workers per year. That's twice the number in last year's unacceptable Senate bill.

The K-K bill claims that benchmarks must be met before amnesty/guest-worker provisions go into effect. But the benchmarks do not require that we have closed the border, do not require that all the fence be built which Congress mandated last October, do not require that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) implement the entry-exit visa system so we can know if visitors and guest workers actually leave, do not require employee verification, and do not require that DHS deport absconders (the 600,000 aliens who have already been ordered deported).

The only thing the bill actually requires is that DHS speedily process amnesty applications and green cards for chain migration.

The K-K bill authorizes 4,000 new Border Patrol agents, but doesn't require that they be actually trained or deployed. It's difficult to hire and keep Border Patrol agents because of the way some have been prosecuted and sentenced to long prison terms after intercepting professional drug smugglers bringing in vans of illegal drugs.

Another benchmark is that "tools" will be provided to prevent illegals from getting jobs, including requirements for ID standards and an employee verification system. But there is no requirement that anybody actually use the tools.

The costs of the K-K bill are mind-boggling, and the Senate has made no attempt to estimate or figure out how to pay them. The Heritage Foundation's Robert Rector puts a potential price tag on this bill of $2.5 trillion, which is five times the cost of the Iraq war!

Rector gave the House Judiciary Committee detailed testimony setting forth how he arrived at this figure. At least 60 percent of illegal aliens lack a high school diploma, which means they will work low-wage jobs, pay little or no income tax, and be heavy users of our schools and means-tested social benefits such as Medicaid, school lunches, WIC, subsidized housing, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and free legal counsel.

Fiscal costs would go up dramatically after amnesty recipients reach retirement. Each elderly low-skill immigrant imposes a net cost (benefits minus taxes) on U.S. taxpayers of about $17,000 per year. These costs would hit Social Security and Medicare at the very time Social Security is expected to go into crisis.

Section 413 calls on Congress to "accelerate the implementation" of the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) (announced by Bush at Waco in 2005) so that the U.S. can "improve the standard of living in Mexico." Do U.S. taxpayers want to take on the awesome economic burden of solving poverty problems in Mexico?

The K-K bill states that we want to increase access to credit for "poor and under served populations in Mexico," and expand efforts "to reduce the transaction costs of remittance flows" from the U.S. to Mexico (now running at $23 billion a year).

The K-K bill also puts us into a "partnership" with Mexico for "increasing health care access for poor and under served populations in Mexico," for "assisting Mexico in increasing its emergency and trauma health care facilities," and for "expanding prenatal care" in the border region. It looks like Robert Rector's estimates are only the start of the costs that will put a truly incredible burden on American taxpayers.