Amnesty Won't Elect Republicans

by Phyllis Schlafly

November 28, 2012

The Republican strategists who confidently predicted that their candidate, Mitt Romney, would win the 2012 election are already pontificating about what Republicans must do to win in 2016. After their disastrous defeat, strategy and policy mistakes, and expensive super PAC advertising that failed to win votes, why should anybody take their advice again?

The elitists now tell us that amnesty for illegal aliens, a.k.a. "immigration reform," is the key to future Republican nirvana. That's wrong-headed advice.

Barack Obama sealed his victory in the battleground states: Ohio, Wisconsin, Virginia, and New Hampshire, but those states have very few Hispanics, and illegal immigration was not a significant issue. Obama won narrowly in Florida, another battleground state, but the Hispanic vote there is Cuban and Puerto Rican and they don't care about immigration laws.

Most polls show that Romney's pro-enforcement policies were more popular than Obama's pro-amnesty views. Let's look at some numbers.

In regard to the entry of illegal aliens, a CBS poll in August found that 63 percent of voters believed that Arizona's immigration enforcement laws are either "about right" or "didn't go far enough." This was confirmed by a Breitbart News election-night poll reporting that 61 percent of voters favored Arizona-style immigration laws, including 63 percent of independents, 53 percent of blacks, and even 40 percent of Democrats.

The notion that the main reason Hispanics vote Democratic is their support of amnesty for illegal aliens and their resentment against Republicans who oppose it is a big political lie. The reason Hispanics vote Democratic is that two-thirds of Mexican immigrant families, although they are hard workers, are in or near poverty and 57 percent use at least one welfare program, which is twice the rate of native-born non-Hispanic households.

That's not a constituency for whom promises of amnesty for more poor immigrants would persuade them to vote for the Party that is branded as supporting tax cuts for the rich, limited government, and spending reductions. Nor does it mean that Hispanics are a voting bloc eager to vote for a white Cuban, Marco Rubio, instead of the Party that is offering them cash, health care, and other benefits.

The elitists are trying to wrap their fallacious argument in Ronald Reagan, but that won't wash. Reagan was persuaded to sign a major amnesty bill for the then-illegal aliens, but it's well known that the resultant amnesty was rife with fraud and did not produce Republican votes.

In Reagan's 1980 victory, he received 35 percent of the Latino vote, and in his landslide of 1984 he received 37 percent. After Reagan's generous 1986 amnesty, George H.W. Bush's 1988 victory produced only 30 percent of the Latino vote.

Another myth about Hispanic voters is the notion that social issues will get them to vote Republican because they are Christian and pro-family. The Hispanic illegitimacy birth rate is 53 percent, about twice that of whites, and a Pew Research Center poll now reports that the majority of Hispanics support gay marriage.

An American National Elections Study asked a question about free market vs. government solutions. Only 17.9 percent of Hispanics responded "the less government the better," and 83.3 percent said a strong government involvement is required to handle economic problems.

The pro-amnesty crowd waged an expensive campaign this year to defeat the famous Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio, but he nevertheless won his reelection. He said he wants to talk "man to man" with Obama and explain that granting amnesty to illegal aliens is unfair to legal immigrants.

Policymakers should read the studies by Cuban exile scholar Jose Azel that probe into Hispanic attitudes and history. He concludes that the sociopolitical heritage from Spain and the post-colonial experience of Latin America have led Latinos to

view government very differently from the principles of limited government enunciated and adopted by our Founding Fathers.

There isn't any real evidence of Mexican assimilation to parallel the Irish and Italian assimilation in the early 20th century. The assimilation of the Irish and Italians absolutely depended on stopping the entry of more new foreigners, which the United States did in the 1920s.

The voting bloc that Mitt Romney ignored, but which Republicans must recapture if they ever want to win again, is the blue-collar men without a college degree who had well-paid manufacturing jobs until the free traders shipped those jobs overseas. They used to be called Reagan Democrats and they were an essential part of the big victories won by Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

Republicans need a new strategy to recapture those good middle-class jobs. We don't need them merely for Republican votes; we need them also to restore our manufacturing capacity and jobs for economic, national security, and family-support reasons.