To Build Or Not To Build The Fence

by Phyllis Schlafly October 25, 2006

Printer Friendly version

Google Ads are provided by Google and are not selected or endorsed by Eagle Forum

Paraphrasing Shakespeare, To build, or not to build; that is the question. Will the Bush Administration build a fence to secure our southern border, or are we being bamboozled with sound and fury, signifying nothing?

Conflicting news stories have appeared since the Senate (80-19) and the House (283-138) passed the Secure Fence Act calling for the building of a 700-mile fence along our 2,000-mile southern border. Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) admitted, "There is no credibility when it comes to proposals for border control and immigration reform."

When President Bush was asked about his alleged promise to sign the fence bill, he restricted his reply to an appropriations bill that includes some funding for something to be done at the border. Meanwhile, the Senate defeated Cornyn's bill to appropriate $3.7 million in supplemental funds to secure the border, although Cornyn said "we have not yet appropriated nearly enough to complete the job."

Senate leaders bragged about the Secure Fence Act as one of this session's primary accomplishments, but immediately thereafter shot it through with loopholes that virtually ensure it will never be built. That must be what they mean by a virtual fence.

Just before recessing to go out on the campaign trail, the Senate and House gave the Bush administration authority to decide where, when and how long a fence should be, plus approval to spend fence money on a variety of alternatives including roads, technology and infrastructure. Congress even gave Homeland Secretary Michael Chertoff discretion over whether to build a fence or choose other options.

When the open borders crowd asserts that a fence will be ineffective because people can climb over it, through it and around it, what they really mean is that the fence law will be ineffective because a variety of loopholes enable the Bush Administration to go around it. If the Bush Administration doesn't start construction on the fence before November 7, we can assume that the passage and signing of a fence bill were just pre-election posturing to fool the voters.

Advocates of a fence never claimed it would be the total solution to stopping the entry of illegal aliens. A fence is just the first step that must be followed by a greatly increased border-patrol force, Social Security verification of employees, and tracking of visitors who become illegal aliens when they overstay their visas.

But, as Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA) said, border fencing is a "critical component." The triple-layered fence that was finally built near San Diego has led to a 70 percent drop in illegal immigration there.

The mass entry of 10 million illegal aliens during the Bush Administration is grievously unfair to our millions of high-school dropouts who desperately need a job to get started building a life. At least two-thirds of the illegal aliens now in this country, as well as those who would benefit by the President's guest-worker plan, likewise do not have a high school education, so they are in direct competition with native-born Americans.

The Center for Immigration Studies has just released a report showing how immigrants (legal and illegal) who arrived during George W. Bush's presidency

have caused a massive displacement of native-born workers. The number of young (age 16 to 34) native-born American men who were employed declined by 1.7 million, while over the same period, the number of new male immigrant workers increased by 1.9 million.

If the jobs held by new immigrant males aged 16 to 34 were made available to jobless native-born males, then the job deficit among our native-born males would be completely eliminated. America doesn't need any more high school dropouts; we have plenty of our own.

Employers are substituting new immigrant workers for young native-born workers. New immigrants account for most of the growth in the number of employed persons in the United States.

The Center for Immigration Studies report also shows that agriculture is not a reason to permit or invite more illegal workers because only 4 percent of all illegal workers in the United States work in agriculture. That means, for every illegal worker in agriculture, 24 are illegally employed in non-farm industries.

So why don't the agriculture employers hire illegal aliens who are already in this country instead of demanding that we import even more workers from other countries?

Furthermore, a large share of new immigrants are employed in the underground economy, which means they are paid in cash and the employer evades the basic labor standards that have been the norm in our economy for many years.

The failure of President Bush to carry out his constitutional duty to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed," e.g., the laws against illegal entry, illegal hiring and illegal documents, gives the lie to his famous boast that he is a compassionate

conservative. His failure shows that he is not only not conservative; he is not compassionate.