

Immigration Project

July, 2007

I. The Economist

Voice 1:

As a conservative schooled in economics, I've got a border security problem of my own. Under that banner, the anti-immigrant crowd is smuggling Communist theories into the discourse of the political Right.

These red coyotes tell us that Mexican labor is driving down wages, stealing American jobs, and destroying the Middle Class. That is exactly what Karl Marx said a free market in Labor will do. And it is the exact opposite of what is happening.



Instead, unemployment in America's labor market runs roughly half that of Europe; job creation here is five-fold higher, and three quarters of our workers own a portfolio of stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. The middle class has never been healthier, wealthier, or more secure.

If the willingness of Latino immigrants to work, and of American employers to hire them, is part of this, I say "More power to them!"

There are plenty of good reasons to secure America's borders. But regulating the labor market is not one of them.

II. The 32 Million

Voice 1:

On talk radio, I used to learn about subjects that mattered to me. Things like school choice, and tax cuts ... a right to life for all God's children, and yes, English instruction for all immigrants.

But now, all I hear is 'Latino gang bangers,' 'Mexicans who can't drive,' 'Hispanics with too many babies.' You insult people who came here illegally to feed their families. You are so obsessed with these 12 million that you forget the 32 million Latinos who are here legally.

In the country of my birth, I knew worse than these ugly, ignorant words. I still vote conservative. I want my children to attend Catholic school without financial penalty. I want low taxes, and investment credits for my bodegas. And I want the best support for my sister's son, who is stationed in Al Anbar.

But you are losing my people. In 2004, forty-four percent of Latinos voted for President George Bush. Last year, only 30 percent supported his party.

You are making enemies by the millions where you once had friends.

I urge you, conservatives: THINK about what you are saying.

III. Border Security

Voice 1:

You can't trust these Congressmen who say they'll defend our borders, then turn around and vote with the President on immigration. What a bunch of hypocrites!



Voice 2:

Oh, really? How does it improve security to vote down more border patrol agents? Did it really help to defeat hundreds of miles of border fence and electronic surveillance?

Voice 1:

Well, Congress approved that last year, too...

Voice 2:

But they never funded it. This year's bill had four-and-a-half billion dollars upfront. It also established 30 thousand new hold-over cells on the border, and a tamper-proof employment ID.

Voice 1:

But shouldn't Congress pass border security first, before they consider a guest worker program?

Voice 2:

Conservatives couldn't pass enforcement-only when we were in the majority. We won't get it now, with Pelosi and Reid in charge.

Voice 1:

Well, isn't no bill better than a flawed bill?

Voice 2:

Not this time. Going forward, we have no new funding for fence, border agents, holding cells, or tamperproof ID. The defeat of this reform starves law enforcement, confuses employers, and provides de facto amnesty to one million new illegals every year.

Voice 1:

That's not what I wanted.

Voice 2:

It's what you ended up with.

IV. Amnesty

Voice 1:

Do Americans want to deport illegal migrants, or to give them amnesty, so that they can stay?

Voice 2:

In its poll of 11,000 voters, Americas Majority Foundation found that amnesty advocates outnumbered supporters of punishment, two-to-one. Sixty-one percent of Americans favor amnesty, either in the form of a guest worker program, or as a path to eventual citizenship.

Voice 1:

Contrary to what you hear on talk radio, most Americans oppose deportation.

Voice 2:

There were no trick questions here. Our pollsters explicitly described the status of these migrants as illegal. Proposals allowing them to stay without punishment were labeled amnesty.

Voice 1:

A majority preferred amnesty among whites, blacks and Hispanics; among men and women... Catholics, Jews, and Protestants. Amnesty was preferred to deportation among Democrats, Independents, and, yes, even among Republicans.

Voice 2:

Listen up, conservatives: To set policy by public opinion is ridiculous. But to do so in ignorance of public opinion is delusional.

V. Rule of Law

Voice 1:

The anti-immigrant crowd says that amnesty for illegals will destroy the rule of law. But sometimes, amnesty is the only way to restore that rule.

Voice 2:

The Constitution defines few federal crimes. Here's one:

Voice 3:

“Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying War against them, or in adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort.”

Voice 1:

During the Civil War, millions of Americans renounced their citizenship, and waged armed revolt. At the conclusion of that conflict, they were amnestied. The armies of the Confederacy were immediately paroled.



Voice 2:

The newspapers of that age denounced amnesty in the same terms you hear today. That argument could not prevail. When the law has been flouted by vast numbers – by public officials, private citizens, and non-citizens alike – punishment alone cannot reestablish it.

Voice 3:

In the post-9/11 era, we must not only control our border, but document those who are already here. Without the voluntary cooperation of the millions who crossed an unenforced border, we cannot achieve this. Amnesty is not only compassionate: It is a practical necessity.

VI. Terrorists

Voice 1:

Critics of the President's comprehensive immigration bill said the new law would not stop terrorists. And they were right. A professional terrorist could readily evade the law's background checks. Nor will fences and sensors on the Mexican border stop them. There is, for instance, a Canadian border.



Voice 2:

But to criticize the bill for what it couldn't do is to ignore what it could. Comprehensive reform can reduce the pool of undocumented U.S. residents – “bring them out of the shadows,” as the administration says. Millions of these undocumented workers would eagerly register their I.D. in return for legalization of their status.

Voice 1:

Of course, NO system of voluntary registration will catch the professionals. We catch terrorists by involuntary registration, that is, by surveillance, or, as our pals on the Left call it, by snooping.

Voice 2:

Comprehensive immigration reform would have funded four and a half billion dollars of practical steps toward border control: more fence, more border agents, more electronic surveillance, and more tamper-proof employee identification. That is why law enforcement overwhelmingly supported it – not for what it couldn't do.

VII. Litmus Test

Voice 1:

I remember when we conservatives were in the minority, and liberals were a triumphant majority.

I remember how the leaders of the Left strengthened themselves at the expense of their movement, piling litmus test upon litmus test. It wasn't enough to favor the poor –you had to oppose the military, you had to support abortion on demand, school busing, gun bans, and racial quotas.



I remember the glee I felt watching these liberal leaders define their movement from

a governing majority to a shrinking minority.

But today, the anti-immigrant crowd is doing the same thing to the Right. At a time when we desperately need new allies for free markets, a strong national defense, and the Right to Life, these so-called leaders are narrowing our base. And they are alienating not only 32 million Hispanics, but significant farming, ranching, and small business interests as well.

If the anti-immigrant crowd has its way, the Left will control the politics of the Southwest, Florida, and yes, even Texas.

Wake up, conservatives. Anti-immigration is one litmus test too many.

VIII. Prosecuting Employers

Voice 1:

In their drive to make conservatives a permanent minority, the anti-immigration crowd is constantly searching out new groups to alienate.

Voice 2:

Pat Buchanan says that instead of rounding up illegals, we should prosecute their employers. This will starve the illegals, and force them to leave the country.

Voice 3:

In other words, let's drive 12 million people to desperation, and see what happens. How many employers will break the law? How many honest workers will turn to crime?

Voice 1:

This is obviously inhumane. But it's also politically insane. American agricultural exports hundreds of billions of dollars of grain and meat products. Without low-cost labor for low-skilled jobs, that export business goes to Argentina and others.

Voice 2:

Hundreds of thousands of American small businesses hire both illegals and American citizens. These employers face financial ruin if they obey the law, and legal ruin if they disobey.

Table 3

INDUSTRIES WITH HIGH USE OF MEXICAN WORKERS	
Industry	Mexican Immigrants as Pct. of Workforce 2000
Agriculture - Crops	22.9
Agriculture - All Other (Except Animal)	10.9
Construction	8.5
Mfg. - Fruit and Vegetable	22.3
Mfg. - Animal Slaughter	26.8
Mfg. - Bakeries	15.2
Mfg. - Other Food	9.4
Mfg. - Textile Mill	9.7
Mfg. - Apparel	15.6
Mfg. - Plastics	10.4
Mfg. - Lumber/Wood	8.7
Mfg. - Furniture	12.2
Wholesale - Grocery	10.6
Professional - Services to Buildings	13.2
Professional - Landscaping	22.6
Entertainment - Restaurant and Drink	10.0
Service - Car Washes	28.0
Service - Drycleaning	10.4
Service - Private Household	13.4

Source: 1990 Census and Census 2000 Supplementary Survey

Voice 3:

Chalk up ranching, agriculture and small business: Three more conservative constituencies for the anti-immigrant crowd to piss off.

IX. Culture War

Voice 1:

It is not the Bush family that is out of touch on immigration. In his last run for

governor, Jeb Bush swept the Hispanic vote in Florida. And in two-thousand-six, George Bush carried 44% of Latinos nationwide.

There are reasons why these Republicans did well. Latinos' business start-up rate is triple the national average. We are more conservative than non-Hispanics on taxes, abortion, and school choice.

Some conservatives are squandering this good will. It's not just the portrayal of Latinos as parasites: It is the obvious disregard for the lives of the illegals who share our heritage.

You don't have to be for open borders to win Hispanic votes. 87% of Latinos reject immediate citizenship for illegals. But you must stop talking about these people like criminals, and you must allow them to get in line. This is what the Bush family advocates.

The anti-immigrant crowd drove down the Hispanic Republican vote 14% in the last election. If that doesn't change in oh-eight, conservatives can kiss Florida and the Southwest goodby.

X. Frankness

Voice 1:

I favor amnesty for illegals. If I said, "I agree with you on border security," or "we must limit their numbers," it would be true – but it would create a misimpression. Amnesty means you don't punish someone for a crime. And as far as Latino workers are concerned, if illegal entry is the worst they've done, I'm for amnesty.

I only wish the deportation crowd would be equally frank. It's a dodge to say: "We'll starve them out by prosecuting their bosses."

By this line of reasoning, it's not enough to drive 12 million workers to desperation, or to irritate 32 million legal Hispanics. The police must also harass innumerable ranchers, farmers, builders, and small business owners for the so-called crime of hiring willing labor for needed work.

Listening to the anti-employer rants on talk radio these days, I wonder: Is it illegality that the anti-immigrant crowd hates? Or is it really free enterprise?



The Immigration Project is a production of

Americas Majority

8640 Travis Street

Overland Park, KS 66212

913-481-3086

Americas_Majority@hotmail.com