

Border Alert



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Labor Unions Trying to Boost Their Numbers with Illegal Immigrants

The percentage of Americans who belong to labor unions is 13.9 as of the end of 1999. John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO, says that labor unions must continue to grow “if working men and women are going to have a stronger voice on the issues that matter to them most.”

Many of the workers that labor is trying to unionize work in hotels and hospitals and these jobs are increasingly being held by illegal immigrants.

Union leaders are soon to vote on a proposal that calls for a general amnesty for more than six million illegal aliens presently in the country. In the past, unions were against such amnesties because they felt that the illegals were taking jobs that could have been held by legal American workers.

The proposal appeals to many groups: Unions are anxious to go after a large new pool of unorganized workers, employers are eager to hire cheap labor without criminal liability, and illegals who have worked hard for years would love to have access to medical care and other services denied to illegal aliens.

The main problem with amnesties is that they beget more illegal immigration. Amnesties signal foreign workers that U.S. citizenship can be had by sneaking across the border and laying low until the next amnesty bill is enacted. Demographers trace the huge increase in Mexican illegals since 1990 to the 1986 amnesty of more than 3 million illegals.

Amnesties are also unfair to unskilled workers already in the U.S.

Between 1980 and 1995, the gap between the wages of high school dropouts and all other workers widened substantially. It is estimated that half of this trend can be traced to illegal immigration of unskilled workers.

The proposal also calls for giving undocumented workers the opportunity to seek citizenship. This would not only protect illegals from threats of employer abuse, but it could also make them less fearful of joining a union.

The AFL-CIO is presently decid-

ing whether or not to undertake a nationwide campaign to pressure lawmakers into action. Jeff Fannell, associate general counsel for the AFL-CIO, said the drive for amnesty faces many hurdles, not just in Washington but also among the rank and file membership, where there really isn't much support for the issue. “A consensus needs to be reached in the federation. I can't say at this point that there is a consensus,” Fannell said.

According to Fannell, some union

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Revised Senate Visa Bill Will Allow Increase in High Tech Workers

The U.S. Senate is working on legislation to change current visa legislation. Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, along with Sen. Spencer Abraham (R-MI) of the Immigration Subcommittee and Sen. Phil Gramm (R-TX) of the Banking Committee, are working to increase the number of visas for highly skilled foreign workers needed by America's high-tech industry.

The new bill is supposed to be a compromise between Gramm's H1-B visa plan and a scaled down proposal made by Hatch and Abraham.

Gramm's original bill would have increased the current top of 115,000 H1-B visas to 200,000. Hatch and Abraham had wanted a smaller increase spread over a couple of years.

Legislation to increase the caps on

these visas is a top priority for the nation's high technology companies. These firms say their needs for highly skilled foreign workers far outstrips the number of high tech visas presently available.

The American Electronics Association has stated that the H1-B visa issue is one of several top legislative priorities for the trade group this year.

The legislation is expected to be fast-tracked through the Judiciary Committee this year. While the legislation will be a vehicle of the Judiciary Committee, sources have said that the drafting would be a joint endeavor with Gramm's Banking Committee.

In the House of Representatives, Rules Committee Chairman David Dreier (R-CA) is reworking a version of H1-B visa legislation that he introduced last year in an effort to obtain bipartisan support.

Smuggling of Illegal Aliens Run by Organized Gangs

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) says it is having a difficult time of controlling the smuggling of illegal aliens into the United States. According to the INS, criminal gangs have created an \$8 billion-a-year business by sneaking the illegals into America.

In early January the INS discovered 15 Chinese men huddled in a nearly airless cargo container along with three dead companions. The ship that smuggled the men to the United States was anchored at the Port of Seattle.

Louis F. Nardi, head of the INS' smuggling and criminal organizations branch, said "Alien smuggling organizations operate internationally with new impunity. Public corruption in source and transit countries contributes to a smuggling organization's ability to move large groups of aliens destined for the United States."

Testifying before a congressional hearing Nardi continued: "The number and sophistication of alien

smuggling organizations has increased dramatically since 1966 and poses a threat not only to our border enforcement activities but to our national security as well."

Ken Elwood, a commissioner in the INS' enforcement division, said that the money the criminal gangs earn from smuggling illegal aliens is turned into racketeering. It complements drug running, prostitution and other criminal operations.

Since the beginning of the year, INS has detained 136 Chinese who were smuggled in cargo containers on eight different ships to ports in California, Washington state and British Columbia. The gangs are now taking would-be illegals to Canada and then smuggling them across to the United States by land.

The Chinese attempting to sneak into the United States pay as much as \$50,000 to the gangs. Once here, the Chinese find work to repay their debt. They work in sweatshops, restaurants, factories, even as prostitutes, super-

vised by cooperating American business owners or gang enforcers for up to five years. By that time they have paid their debt to the smugglers and can begin sending money back home to their families.

Elwood added that the exodus of Chinese workers has been going on for decades. Many go to Indonesia, Singapore, India, the Philippines and Australia and now, especially, to the United States.

In Chinese culture, as well as many others, the individual is seen as an extension of the family. The family sends younger members off knowing that they will eventually begin to send money back to the family. Because this smuggling to the United States has paid off so well for the families, there is little or no incentive to cooperate with U.S. officials who are trying to stop the illegal immigration.

The INS has joined with the FBI, the U.S. Coast Guard and other federal agencies in an effort to curb

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INS Slows Enforcement Activities to Ease Census Fears

On February 14, the INS instructed its agents to delay routine enforcement actions that might interfere with the 2000 Census count, in an effort to convince illegal aliens and others that it is safe to be counted. This is part of a campaign to persuade suspicious and fearful Americans to comply with the census in order to reverse the trend toward lower participation in the census counting.

Ken Elwood of INS field operations, said the agency is telling the agents to "stay away from those areas during the time the census is being conducted." He added that INS will not stop work on cases involving national security, public safety or wanted felons.

INS officials will be airing televi-

sion commercials by three well-known baseball players—Barry Bonds, Derek Jeter and Ivan Rodriguez—that emphasize they are not afraid to fill out census forms because the information they give is absolutely confidential.

President Clinton is assuring Americans that "information on census forms is totally confidential. . . if we believe everybody in our American community counts, we've got to make sure everyone is counted in this year's census," he said.

Kenneth Prewitt, Census Director, said that most Americans feel that census information is like other government data and assume that it is not private. Prewitt estimates that 3-4 percent of the population, a dispropor-

tionate number of them minorities, don't send back their forms because of fears that the information will be given to authorities.

As an example of what the Census Bureau is up against, Prewitt said that an FBI agent asked the bureau's office in El Paso, Texas to give him a badge and other identification. "He basically wanted to impersonate a census enumerator in order to get into a house," Prewitt said. The agent told census officials that he would come back with a subpoena if they did not comply.

After some back-and-forth bickering, the agent's supervisor agreed to "cease and desist," Prewitt said.

Haitian Refugees Call U.S. Immigration Policy Racist

In January hundreds of Haitian-Americans and African-Americans organized a mock funeral procession, carrying black-draped coffins to symbolize those who have lost their lives trying to reach Florida's shores.

Chanting "Justice!", the protesters marched through the streets disrupting traffic as they headed toward the INS headquarters. The demonstration had two goals: to change U.S. immigration policy, which protesters say is racist, and to reunite a Haitian mother with her two children, who were sent back to Haiti without her.

The woman arrived on January 1

Gangs Smuggling Illegal Aliens

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the smuggling of illegal aliens. There have been some successes.

Last year government officials busted a three-year-old ring that had been smuggling as many as 300 Indian nationals into the United States each month—at a price of \$20,000 per head. According to the INS, the gang had smuggled at least 10,000 Indians into the country, grossing more than \$200 million.

In Buffalo, New York, the INS stopped a cartel that operated across five continents. The gang had brought about 150 Chinese into the United States at a cost of \$47,000 each. Officials believe that the gang had made \$169 million in two years.

INS says that many U.S. residents hide persons from their native countries. It is known that various American businesses actually arrange to have aliens smuggled in to work for them.

Louis Nardi said: "The INS has long maintained that there is a nexus between alien smuggling and illegal employment." To date, however, there has been just one successful prosecution.

with a boatload of more than 400 refugees. The demonstration followed the repatriation of 407 refugees intercepted at sea. The passengers paid as much as \$5,000 each to make the trip from Haiti to Miami. They had hoped to land on U.S. shores during the cover of darkness.

Current immigration policy allows the INS to return refugees that are stopped at sea. Except for four women who were taken to Miami for medical attention, the other refugees were returned to Haiti. Yvena Rhinvil's two children were sent back without her. She is being allowed a political asylum hearing and has a pending request for her children to join her in the United States.

Because of the widespread publicity and support for Elian Gonzalez, the six-year-old Cuban boy whose mother died trying to reach Florida, the Haitian protesters are calling for

"equal treatment, equal justice"—they say current immigration policy favors Cubans.

Presently, Cubans who make it to the U.S. are allowed to stay, while others must establish asylum claims under more rigorous standards.

Miami-Dade Mayor Alex Penelas told the crowd he had sent a letter to U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno, asking for a review of current immigration policy. "Everyone should have a right to have their day in court. This is not about nationality. This is about justice," he said.

Editor's Note: Whenever America breaks the rules for one group, all the others line up and demand equal treatment. And there is no justification for denying their claim. That is why all illegal aliens must be treated the same. They must be deported upon discovery. They must be treated as criminals because that is exactly what they are. When we elect politicians with the courage to uphold our laws, we will solve our immigration crisis. Until then, the floodgates will remain open.

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Elían Gonzalez, Congress and the INS

Elían Gonzalez is a shining symbol of everything that is wrong with America's immigration policy. And the sad details of his personal crisis illustrate how immigrants are being used by politicians at the local, state and federal level to achieve their own selfish ends.

The thousands of rioters, traffic disrupters and other hoodlums in Miami don't care about Elían. He is merely a tool the leaders of the Cuban community are using to poke Castro in the eye. Republican Congressmen and Senators who have become involved in Elían's case don't care that this child just lost his mother in a tragic drowning. They are just using him to embarrass the Democrats in an election year. I do not recall Congressman Dan Burton ever doing anything of substance to reform our border or immigration policies. Why is he suddenly so fervent about a single child?

Our entire immigration "policy" has been perverted into a circus where both parties are using it solely to garner votes for the 2000 elections. Very few elected officials from either party truly are concerned or even aware of the terrible consequences their actions (or inactions) are causing.

And, of course, if Elían is granted permission to stay, every other immigrant group in America will be rioting for "equal treatment" for their illegal aliens. Oh. Did everybody forget that Elían is, after all, nothing more than another illegal alien?

Did you know that tens of thousands of divorced spouses are routinely kidnapping their joint custody children and taking them, quite illegally, to the United States, where the other parent may never see their child again? Is this a policy

our politicians support? Does your Congressman support kidnapping?

This issue is far more complex than the immigrant rights advocates would have you understand. Our current immigration policy is helping to destabilize this nation and pushing it rapidly toward a crisis that can only end in the Balkanization (or dis-Uniting) of our United States.

Looking at the scene in Miami documents the consequences of allowing millions of immigrants, especially those from totalitarian regimes, into America without insisting that they learn about how to behave in a country where laws, not mobs, protect the innocent. It is disturbing to note that the Miami Police chose not to uphold the law, apparently, because they were afraid to go against the Cuban community that wields power in the style of a fascist dictatorship, not a free society.

Should there be equality for every illegal immigrant? Absolutely! Every illegal alien, whether he or she is old or young, white, yellow, black or brown, from Europe, Africa, Asia or Latin America should be fingerprinted and deported immediately. Every time our government makes an exception for one group, every other group files suit and America is forced to lower the bar for citizenship one more time.

Right now, our asylum and amnesty laws are totally politicized. While there may, in fact, be a few dozen individuals who have a well-founded fear of persecution (the INS basis for granting amnesty or asylum), we are granting blanket asylum and amnesty to millions every year.

I don't care what happens to Elían Gonzalez. I care what happens to our nation. I care that nobody in South Florida speaks English. I care that Americans are beginning to feel like strangers in their own country. I care that immigrant gangs are murdering hundreds of American kids just as nice as Elían Gonzalez. And I am appalled that our politicians are all posturing about this trumped up mini-crisis but won't lift a finger to reform our nation's border and immigration laws that have created the climate that cost Elían's mother her life.

Labor Unions

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members regard immigrants as people who take jobs away from American workers, are paid low wages and undercut working conditions for all workers.

"But," he said, "there are far more now that see the employers, not employees, as the problem. These are employers that are more than willing to exploit workers by bringing in foreign labor."

Randel Johnson of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said this issue could split the labor movement. "On the one hand they are looking for a new base of organizing to offset declining membership. But they have traditionally opposed increased immigration for fear of job losses."

U.S. Border Control Chairman Edward I. Nelson stated "It proves conclusively that the AFL-CIO doesn't give a damn about American workers or protecting their jobs, but will do anything to make a buck for themselves."



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Chairman / **Edward I. Nelson**

Editor / **Pam Pitzer**

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