

An Amnesty By Any Other Name is Still an Amnesty

For most Americans, an illegal alien amnesty has all the political appeal of a massive tax increase. But politicians are very creative when it comes to pandering to the special interests that want amnesty for many or all of the estimated 9-11 million illegal aliens living in the U.S.

Currently, Congress is considering a number of legislative proposals that are stealth amnesty programs. One would grant legalization to people who came to this country illegally before the age of 16, and just about anyone else who could meet a very loose definition of a student. In addition to legalization, these beneficiaries would also become eligible for subsidized in-state tuition rates at public universities and colleges. There would be no limit on the number of people who could qualify for this amnesty.

For those who don't meet even the loose definition of a student, some in Congress are proposing to turn illegal aliens into "guest workers," who over time could become permanent residents. Guest workers would also have the right to bring their family members to live in this country. This program, too, would have no numerical limits.

Still another proposal would focus on agricultural workers, allowing anyone who could "prove" that he or she worked as little as 100 days in agriculture to apply for legal status in the U.S. In addition, it would allow big agricultural corporations the right to bring in a steady supply of new guest workers every year.

All of these proposals cleverly change the unpopular term "amnesty" to a much more appealing term, "earned legalization." On closer examination, however, earned legalization essentially means having gotten away with violating our immigration laws for a period of time, while not having committed any heinous crimes.

Whether they disguised as guest worker programs, or a DREAM Act for young people, or earned legalization for illegal aliens who haven't gotten into serious trouble with the law, they are still amnesty proposals.

Besides rewarding millions of people who broke the law and placing immigrants who obeyed the law at a disadvantage, individually or collectively, these amnesty proposals would:

Encourage More Illegal Immigration

Amnesties always lead to more illegal immigration, as millions more people will be encouraged to come here in the expectation that eventually they, too, will be rewarded. We granted what was supposed to be a one-time-only amnesty to some 3 million illegal aliens in 1986, only to find that today they have been replaced by an estimated 9-11 million new illegal aliens. Amnesty doesn't cure the problem; it exacerbates it.

Encourage Massive Litigation

The various amnesty proposals would be the immigration bar association's dream. Amnesty is almost guaranteed produce a glut of law suits that would choke the system

and inevitably lead to rubber stamp approvals of almost every application. The sponsors of the 1986 amnesty freely admit that countless people fraudulently obtained legalization because the system simply could not be adequately policed.

Instead of amnesty what is needed is a combination of law enforcement against the illegal aliens themselves and the people who employ them, and incentives to convince many illegal aliens to leave of their own volition.

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