

Bush amnesty for illegal immigrants insults legal immigrants

University Wire

August 20, 2001

Copyright 2001 Oklahoma Daily via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN

Length: 790 words

Byline: By Thomas Dixon, Oklahoma Daily

Dateline: Norman, Okla.

Body

During the first few months of his presidency, former Texas Gov. George W. Bush has attempted to establish himself as an expert on U.S. relations with Mexico. Meetings with Mexican President Vicente Fox, coupled with the requests of big business, have influenced Bush's policy toward Mexico heavily, and President Bush has created an **amnesty** proposal to "solve" the problem of approximately 3.5 million **illegal** Mexican **immigrants** who currently reside in the United States. Bush's proposal proves he is anything but an expert on U.S.-Mexican relations.

U. Oklahoma

Primarily, Bush's **amnesty** proposal depicts his blatant ignorance of available empirical data. In 1986, the U.S. granted **amnesty** to 2.7 million **illegal aliens**, and an Immigration and Naturalization Services draft report submitted by Lamar Smith indicates the 1986 **amnesty** resulted in a surge of new **illegal** immigration. However, **amnesty** backers could ignore empirical data and apply common sense to discover **amnesty** only increases **illegal** immigration. Obviously, **amnesty** sends the message to aspiring **immigrants** that if they illegally immigrate to the U.S. and wait long enough, they will eventually receive a green card. As Phil Graham says, "**amnesty** rewards **illegal** behavior." Furthermore, **amnesty** insults people who legally immigrated to the United States. Almost one million people each year immigrate to the United States through legal channels -- we hardly have a restrictionist policy. Such **immigrants** exhibited a respect for U.S. laws and worked hard to obtain legal residence in the United States. **Amnesty** says to legal **immigrants**, "You wasted your time with all of that paperwork." Our current immigration policy, which centers around family ties, makes admittance to the U.S. fairly easy. I find it hard to sympathize with **illegal immigrants** when they could have easily received legal admittance to the United States.

I must also question why Bush only wants to give **amnesty** to the 3.5 million **illegal** Mexican aliens living within our borders. Why not give **amnesty** to all 8.5 million **illegal aliens**, regardless of nationality? Because his policy favors Mexican **immigrants** over other nationalities, it seems clear capturing more votes from Mexican Americans drives Bush's **amnesty** proposal, not aiding the **immigrants**.

Additionally, most people, our president included, incorrectly assume **illegal immigrants** play a vital role in our economy by taking the jobs no Americans want. Although few people covet a minimum wage job picking fruit in California orchards, more than 10 million American workers lack a high school education and face direct competition from **illegal immigrants** for such jobs. Moreover, real wages for workers at the bottom of the U.S. workforce have declined over the past decade. If the shortage of lower-skilled workers, which business and our president cite as justification for **amnesty** really exists, why wouldn't real wages for low-skilled workers increase as a response to the shortage? Simply stated, big business wants **amnesty** and increased **illegal** immigration to keep their costs down. Unfortunately, keeping lower-skilled workers' wages down also means decreased opportunities for advancement among the working poor -- both migrant and non-migrant.

Bush amnesty for illegal immigrants insults legal immigrants

A closer analysis of the situation reveals another solution. Not all illegal immigrants who successfully cross our borders spend the remainder of their lives in the United States; hundreds of thousands return home each year. By giving the resource-starved INS the funds necessary to target employers who hire illegal immigrants, we could make significant progress in reducing the number of illegal immigrants in the United States. The natural, unforced exodus of illegal immigrants, combined with targeting and punishing employers, would result in dramatic decreases in illegal immigration in just a few years.

Say what you want about the inaugural months of the Bush presidency, but never call him an expert on U.S.-Mexican relations or a wizard at immigration policy. Bush's amnesty proposal would increase illegal immigration, insults people who worked hard to legally immigrate to the United States, and discriminates against illegal immigrants from countries besides Mexico.

Further, the Bush administration developed its amnesty proposal to cater to big business and capture the Mexican-American vote, not to benefit U.S. citizens or the illegal immigrants. Granting amnesty and fostering illegal immigration keeps wages for America's poorest workers low, and results in decreased opportunities for lower-skilled immigrants to the United States. The United States has other options to combat illegal immigration. We should look at them.

(C) 2001 Oklahoma Daily via U-WIRE

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: IMMIGRATION (94%); ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS (90%); AMNESTY (90%); HISPANIC AMERICANS (89%); IMMIGRATION LAW (89%); WAGES & SALARIES (83%); CITIZENSHIP (77%); TALKS & MEETINGS (77%); IMMIGRATION REGULATION & POLICY (77%); PUBLIC POLICY (77%); FARM LABOR (67%); LABOR FORCE (64%); MINIMUM WAGE (63%); SECONDARY SCHOOLS (50%)

Industry: FARM LABOR (67%); SECONDARY SCHOOLS (50%)

Person: GEORGE W BUSH (78%); VICENTE FOX QUESADA (57%)

Geographic: TEXAS, USA (79%); CALIFORNIA, USA (79%); UNITED STATES (98%); MEXICO (96%)

Load-Date: August 20, 2001