

THE 1994 CAMPAIGN: CALIFORNIA; Feinstein Attacking Opponent for Illegal Nanny

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Body

Representative Michael Huffington struggled today with still another accusation that he had aided and abetted **illegal** immigration, and Senator Dianne **Feinstein**, his **opponent** in the Senate election, rushed to take advantage of his mounting political adversity.

In the newest twist to his immigration problems, Mr. Huffington, a Republican, acknowledged transporting an undocumented family **nanny** to Washington in April 1993. That was less than two months after he co-sponsored a House bill calling for a five-year jail sentence for any employer who transported an **illegal** immigrant for work purposes.

Mr. Huffington acknowledged the contradiction late Friday while talking to reporters in Santa Barbara, his hometown. But he said he was "not at all" bothered by it because the bill never became law.

Today, with the **Feinstein campaign** hammering Mr. Huffington's immigration miscues with a major new advertising effort, his wife, Arianna, offered still another perspective on the incident.

"The **nanny** really only flew out to Washington with us from Santa Barbara and then right back to accompany a child," Mrs. Huffington said. "I know that, because I run the house staff. I hire, and I pay. Michael has said he accepts responsibility for all this, but he really has no legal responsibility. I'm the one who runs the staff. I'm the one who should be castigated."

On Thursday, also in Santa Barbara, Mr. Huffington acknowledged an even more serious occurrence: that the **nanny** was in the United States illegally when the Huffington family hired her in 1989.

After that acknowledgement, the Federal Immigration and Naturalization Service began an inquiry into the **nanny's** employment.

The disclosures involving the **nanny** stem from investigative reporting by The Los Angeles Times and have thrown Mr. Huffington's **campaign** into turmoil. He and Ms. **Feinstein** have been locked in a neck-and-neck race for months, with Mr. Huffington calling often and loudly for stronger immigration laws, the hottest political issue in **California** this fall.

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But many political analysts believe the nanny matter may just give the Senator the edge she has been looking for. Certainly she is wasting no time going after Mr. Huffington, and hard.

At a Democratic rally today in San Francisco at which she was joined by Hillary Rodham Clinton, Ms. Feinstein accused Mr. Huffington of trying to use his personal fortune to "buy" a Senate seat, adding, "I think it should be earned."

And continuing the hard line, one of her new ads begins: "Politician Michael Huffington talks tough about illegal immigrants, but now Huffington admits that for years he employed an illegal immigrant at his home. What else don't we Californians know about Michael Huffington?"

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