

Immigration bill riles conservatives The House members criticized liberalizing proposals, as well as protesters and Bush.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

March 31, 2006 Friday

Copyright 2006 Philadelphia Newspapers, LLC All Rights Reserved

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly.com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A04

Length: 916 words

Byline: David Espo, Associated Press

Body

House conservatives, in a vehement attack yesterday on legislation to **liberalize** U.S. **immigration** laws, **criticized** President **Bush**, accused the Senate of fouling the air, said prisoners rather than illegal farm workers should pick America's crops, and denounced the use of Mexican flags by **protesters**.

"I say let the prisoners pick the fruits," said Rep. Dana Rohrabacher of California, one of more than a dozen Republicans who took turns condemning a Senate **bill** that would offer an estimated 11 million illegal immigrants an opportunity for citizenship.

"Anybody that votes for an amnesty **bill** deserves to be branded with a scarlet letter A," Rep. Steve King of Iowa said, referring to a guest-worker provision in the Senate measure.

Their news conference took place across the Capitol from the Senate, where supporters and critics of the **bill** seemed determined to heed admonitions from both **Bush** and Senate Majority Leader **Bill** Frist to conduct a dignified, civilized debate.

The **House** has passed legislation to tighten border security, while the Senate approach also includes provisions to regulate the flow of temporary workers into the country and control the legal fate of millions of illegal immigrants already here. **Bush** has broadly endorsed the Senate approach, saying he wants a comprehensive **bill**.

It was the second day in a row that congressional Republicans aired their differences on an issue that directly affects the fastest-growing segment of the electorate. Under **Bush's** leadership, Republicans have made big inroads among Hispanic voters, and party strategists fret that the **immigration** debate could jeopardize their gains.

Leading GOP senators disagreed Wednesday on whether the **bill** amounted to amnesty.

There was no such debate at the news conference in the **House**, where not a word was spoken in defense of the Senate **bill**, and even **Bush** was not spared criticism.

"I don't think he's concerned about alienating voters; he's not running for reelection," said Rep. Thomas G. Tancredo of Colorado. He said Republicans could lose the **House** and Senate over the **immigration** issue, and said of **Bush**: "I wish he'd think about the party, and of course I also wish he'd think about the country."

Immigration bill riles conservatives The House members criticized liberalizing proposals, as well as protesters and Bush.

Referring to a wave of demonstrations in recent weeks, Rep. Virgil H. Goode Jr. of Virginia said, "I say if you are here illegally and want to fly the Mexican flag, go to Mexico and wave the American flag."

King analyzed the issue in class terms: "The elite class in America is becoming a ruling class, and they've made enough money by hiring cheap illegal labor that they think they also have some kind of a right to cheap servants to manicure their nails and their lawn, for example.

"So this... new ruling class of America is expanding a servant class in America at the expense of the middle class of America, the blue collar of America that used to be able to punch a time clock, buy a modest house and raise their families."

Rep. J.D. Hayworth of Arizona and others said Republicans would pay a price in the midterm elections if they vote for anything like the Senate bill.

Next week, critics of the Senate bill are expected to try to strip out the guest-worker provision and roll back the provisions relating to illegal immigrants who are already here.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter (R., Pa.) has said he hopes to find a compromise that is more broadly acceptable than the legislation that cleared his committee.

Issue: Immigration

Bob Casey Jr., state treasurer and Democratic Senate candidate:

Casey, through his spokesman, said the first priority is to enforce existing immigration laws and strengthen border security by at least doubling the number of agents. "Once we see progress and a real commitment on that end, we can then pursue an industry-by-industry approach to deal with the illegal immigrants who are already here," Casey said yesterday.

He opposes a provision of the Senate Judiciary Committee bill that would allow the nation's estimated 11 million illegal immigrants to apply for citizenship if they meet certain requirements. "This kind of approach is premature," he said.

He supports an approach known as AgJOBS - incorporated into the Judiciary bill and backed by the farm workers' union - which creates a guest-worker program for illegal immigrant farm workers and could allow them to eventually earn a green card.

"So the goal is creating a legalized workforce," Casey spokesman Larry Smar said. "The citizenship issue is something to be evaluated down the road."

Sen. Rick Santorum (R., Pa.):

Santorum said Tuesday that he generally opposes allowing illegal immigrants to become U.S. citizens without first going back to their home country.

Without that requirement, "I don't know why anyone would bother trying to wait in line to get a green card," he said after addressing Pennsylvania farmers at a Washington forum Tuesday.

He said he supports doubling the number of border agents and studying ways to increase the number of legal immigrants in the country. Santorum told the farmers that, as the son of an immigrant, he is mindful of immigrants' contributions and the need to be compassionate. But, he said, "the bottom line is that we have to treat people who came to this country illegally differently than those who came legally, and if we don't, then we will never control our borders, period."

Immigration bill riles conservatives The House members criticized liberalizing proposals, as well as protesters and Bush.

Santorum opposes a guest-worker program for illegal immigrant farm workers, his spokesman Robert L. Traynham said yesterday.

Carrie Budoff, with the Associated Press

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: **IMMIGRATION** (91%); LEGISLATION (91%); US REPUBLICAN PARTY (90%); ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS (90%); POLITICAL PARTIES (90%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (90%); VOTERS & VOTING (89%); US CONGRESS (79%); CITIZENSHIP (78%); ELECTIONS (78%); AMNESTY (78%); CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS (78%); FOREIGN LABOR (78%); POLITICAL CANDIDATES (78%); FARM LABOR (78%); PROTESTS & DEMONSTRATIONS (77%); NATIONAL SECURITY (73%); HISPANIC AMERICANS (73%); TERRITORIAL & NATIONAL BORDERS (73%); CONSERVATISM (73%); TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT (72%); BORDER CONTROL (72%)

Industry: FARM LABOR (78%)

Person: THOMAS G TANCREDO (59%); DANA ROHRABACHER (59%); STEVE KING (58%); VIRGIL H GOODE JR (58%)

Geographic: CALIFORNIA, USA (79%); UNITED STATES (95%)

Load-Date: March 31, 2006