

Endangered Pander

Slate Magazine

May 29, 2007 Tuesday

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Section: KAUSFILES

Length: 18362 words

Byline: Mickey Kaus

Body

Endangered Pander? McCain supports legalization of illegal immigrants, [loses 5 points over the month among Hispanic Republicans](#) in California, according to SurveyUSA. Fred Thompson blasts the legalization bill from the right and his support among Hispanics quintuples, putting him ahead of McCain (and Giuliani) among Hispanics. ... P.S.: These are Hispanic Republicans, of course. But they are not insignificant, making up 17% of "likely Republican Primary voters" in Survey USA's model. ... P.P.S.: McCain's loss (and Thompson's gain) was actually greater among Hispanics than among GOP voters generally. ... P.P.P.S.: You don't even want to see what happened among black Republicans. ... 8:52 P.M.

A Poll Number WaPo Omitted: In that [recent ABC-Wash Post poll](#), mentioned by Jonathan Weisman in [this morning's Kyl-side--spinner](#), only 29 percent approved President Bush's handling of the immigration issue, a "career low." ... 64% disapproved. Many of those disapproving are obviously people who believe Bush's approach isn't permissive enough. Still, the fall seems significant, coming in the middle of a week of righteous Bush moralizing in defense of his position. When people pay attention, he seems to lose ground. ... Bush's support on the issue among Republicans plunged from 61% to 45% in a month. ... See [Gary Langer's write-up](#). ...

P.S.: Arizona's Sen. Kyl made sure he'd be able to sense "[momentum building](#)" behind his bill by [scheduling no public appearances](#) back home during last week's recess, according to the Christian Science Monitor. ... 6:08 P.M.

McCain Inaugurates the New Civility: President Bush recently said opponents of his immigration bill ["don't want to do what's right for America."](#) McCain now [takes it a step further](#), claiming those who disagree with him

would intentionally make our country's problems worse ...

[E.A.] ... 5:37 P.M.

I have an [op-ed in the L.A. Times](#) on the similarities between Bush's reckless Iraq gamble and his reckless immigration gamble. It's adapted and updated from arguments blogged here. ... 4:41 P.M.

The Fleecing of Sen. Kyl, cont.: National Review has [more gruesome details of the Senate's "grand bargain" on immigration](#). It turns out that employers are specifically forbidden from requiring employees to pass the fancy new EEVS 'are-you-really-legal' check before going to work. Employers have to hire "blind" and then try to fire later, if they get a "nonconfirmation notice" from the government--after all appeals and "the period to timely file a petition for judicial review" has passed.

It's always harder to fire someone than it is to not hire them in the first place. Plus, it looks to me as if the system gives even new, post-2007 illegal immigrants a free shot to go to work. If there's a backlog in the agency checking

Endangered Pander

the documents, they get to keep working. Then if, months down the road, their documents are rejected, they can just not show up for work one day and fade back into the 'shadows,' to try again later. Do you think the ICE is going to track them down? I don't.

That's a good deal, not for existing illegals--they don't have to worry about this at all, they'll be legalized!--but for future illegals, the ones still in Mexico and El Salvador, etc. who might want to come across the border in 2008 and thereafter. The bill's tough employer sanction system was supposed to deny them above-ground work opportunities, but it doesn't look like that will be the case.

Sen. Kyl's courageous wonky negotiating toughness becomes more apparent by the hour! At some point you have to conclude that he was willingly fleeced. ... 3:10 P.M. [link](#)

Reminder: Democratic ex-Congressperson Brad Carson on why Democrats should oppose a continued influx of unskilled illegal immigrants. ... He's the Thinking Man's Lou Dobbs. ... 4:29 A.M.

Today's WaPo story--"Backers of Immigration Bill More Optimistic"--would be more convincing if it had any non-backer of the bill admitting that there was "momentum building" behind it. As it stands, it reads like the press release Senator Kyl would have written before he went off to last week's recess. Of course the bill's "architects" are going to claim that senators were unfazed by the vociferous, mainly conservative opposition. They may be right, but if WaPo did more than buy their spin--if they even interviewed the other side--it's not evident here. ... P.S.: WaPo does provide some evidence that some objections from the left about the bill are mostly bluster--the head of the League of United Latin American Citizens basically admits as much. But did anyone really think that LULAC was going to try and bring down a bill it helped write? ... [via [Drudge](#)]

P.S.: I haven't forgotten the Killer Amendment Contest. ...

P.P.S.: AP reports on a possible amendment swap, in which Republicans would trade looser limits on family immigration in exchange for an amendment to "toughen" the bill's version of the Pence "Touchback" Scam. Sounds like a Fleecing of the GOPs--the only question being whether the GOP senators are actually quite willing to get fleeced as long as they can boast of a phony "toughening." ...

Update: Wash Times says the important thing is how Sen. McConnell feels. ..3:15 A.M.

A few days ago I speculated that Bush had to take a prominent role as champion of the immigration bill, even if that hurt its chances, because his goal is to convince Latinos that he, a Republican, achieved the legalization of illegals. A friend points out that I didn't take the argument far enough: To really drive the Bush-as-Lincoln point home, Bush has to be seen as defending the bill against racist, anti-Latino opponents. That would explain why he has raised the race issue--e.g., "America must not fear diversity"--even though it has served to enrage the opposition. ... 2:36 A.M. [link](#)

Right blogger Dean Barnett praises left blogger Steve Gilliard, who died Saturday at age 41. ... See also [Kos](#). ... [via [Instapundit](#)] 1:55 A.M.

Paranoid's Corner: I haven't been watching Fox but judging from their immigration-free home page the eerie Fox blackout on anti-amnesty rabble-rousing is still in effect--and extends to Rupert Murdoch's print property, the New York Post (which you'd also think would be making a fuss about the Senate's bill). ... P.S.: And did that JFK terror plot really have to be broken up the weekend before the immigration debate resumes in the Senate? I'm just sayin' ... P.P.S.: Murdoch may not be shutting down his conservative media empire's natural proclivities to please Bush. He may be shutting down his empire's natural proclivities to make them conform to his own proclivities, as evidenced in this 2004 WSJ article. Either way, its creepily dictatorial. ... I'm with [Jack](#). ...

Update: There was some discussion of immigration this morning on Fox. The segment I saw--on "Live Desk with Martha MacCallum"--seemed atypically balanced, even comprehensivist. We'll see if the network's bigger guns-

Endangered Pander

e.g., Hannity--are allowed to go after the bill. [Doesn't look like it](#). ... Update 2: Hannity & Colmes had a short-but-satisfying segment in the armpit of the broadcast, wedged between Bob Shrum and Paris Hilton. .. 1:39 A.M.

Murdoch will take care of these guys: As apparent contrition for the obnoxiously smug, self-satisfied, cultishly conformist Wall Street Journal "[editorial meeting](#)"-- at which Paul Gigot's crew denounced fellow conservatives as not "even rational" and "foaming at the mouth" on immigration--the Journal editors had Heather Mac Donald [on their TV show](#) on May 26--then basically rolled over while she calmly explained what was wrong with the bill.

The Journal is in an odd position in this debate, because while President Bush is busy promoting his immigration bill on the grounds that its enforcement provisions really will work this time--honest!--the Journal seemingly promotes the bill on the grounds that enforcement can never work. I especially don't understand the argument, made by Jason Riley in the televised meeting, that a program of legal guest workers will necessarily dramatically reduce the flow of **illegals** even absent effective border barriers.

The notion seems to be that if the economy "needs" 400,000 low wage workers, and you let in 300,000 legally, then only 100,000 will come in illegally. But that assumes it's only the demand side of the equation that determines the flow, which I don't think is how markets work. There's also supply--how many workers want to come here, given stagnation, droughts, recessions, etc, in their homelands--and wages, which match supply with demand. If 800,000 are interested in coming here, and 300,000 come in legally, the other 500,000 aren't going to necessarily stay home (assuming, again, border enforcement is futile). They're going to come and bid down twages--raising the number of workers **U.S.** employers want to hire. Eventually the wage will be so low that some of the 800,000 are discouraged and don't come.

The market might equilibrate at 500,000 (300,000 legals plus 200,000 **illegals**), or 600,000 (300,000 legals and 300,000 **illegals**) or 700,000, or anywhere in between. But it won't necessarily stop at the preexisting job "need" level set by government bureaucrats.

It's as odd to see the editorial champions of markets ignore how markets work as it is to see the leading advocates of supply-side thinking ignore the supply side. Do they really believe it? ... 1:19 A.M.

Sunday, June 3, 2007

How was your Memorial Day Recess? Sen.Lamar Alexander [attends meeting of constituents concerned about the Senate immigration bill](#), is rescued by Army Delta Force rapid reaction unit. Just kidding! But a protective cordon was formed, apparently. ... [via [Instapundit](#)] 2:14 A.M.

Saturday, June 2, 2007

HuffPo Secret Menu: Eat the Press is [not dead](#), it turns out. It's hiding, [Gutfeld](#)-style, under an innocuous house ad two screens down on the Huffington Post Media ["vertical."](#) ... P.**S.**: When do I get a vertical? 3:42 P.M.

Friday, June 1, 2007

Momentum slowing? Hillary sounds [pessimistic on the chances for Bush's grand immigration bargain](#), reports Josh Gerstein of the Sun:

Mrs. Clinton said it was possible **no** comprehensive immigration bill would pass. She said the tech executives might need to seek a stand-alone measure to increase the number of "H1B" visas, which allow technology firms to bring workers to America from India, China, and other countries.

I hope she knows something. ... Maybe she's been eavesdropping on Sen. Chambliss. ... 2:28 A.M.

Thursday, May 31, 2007

Noonan [rips Bush](#): "He threw away his inheritance. I do not understand such squandering." 11:03 P.M.

Endangered Pander

Suppose Congress passes the Kyl-Kennedy-Bush immigration bill this year. And next year the voters elect as president Fred Thompson, or someone else who is skeptical of the benefits of putting mass legalization ahead of getting control of the border. Are the new "Z-visas" promised to illegals in the bill revocable by a future Congress? If they are, why would any rational illegal come "out of the shadows" to claim one (and make himself or herself eligible for re-illegalization)? ... P.S.: And why do I feel that these are the sorts of questions that would be answered in Senate hearings if the administration weren't trying to ram the bill through in a desperate bum's rush? ... 9:21 P.M.

Immigration insurrection: [Blame the equipment!](#) ... [via [Drudge](#)] 7:50 P.M.

Hillary, Eavesdropper Big Mama is Listening! Kf has obtained a copy of page 93 of the unreleased Gerth-Van Natta Hillary Clinton book, which describes how, during the '92 campaign, Hillary herself

"listened to a secretly recorded audiotape of a phone conversation of Clinton critics plotting their next attack. The tape contained discussions of another woman who might surface with allegations about an affair with Bill. Bill's supporters monitored frequencies used by cell phones, and the tape was made during one of those monitoring sessions."

Hmm. Phone-monitoring was a key investigative method of what notorious California-based Clinton-friendly private eye and problem solver? Just asking! ... P.S.: I'm not talking about Jack Palladino, who is explicitly mentioned in the footnotes as working for the Clinton team and would not have to be described as a "supporter." But of course, it could still be him, or any other "supporter." (Nor is it clear if the phones were being monitored in Arkansas or D.C..) ... I don't know how common cell-phone-monitoring was in 1992. ... P.P.S.: Wasn't there a character in Joe Klein's Primary Colors who did this sort of thing? ... P.P.P.S.: Isn't it [not so legal](#)? ... See also this exegesis of the [elements of a violation of 18 U.S.C. 2511 \(1\) \(a\)](#). I'm not an expert, but it looks like a potential minefield for Hillary. Think what Patrick Fitzgerald could have done with [the provision criminalizing](#) anyone who "intentionally uses, or endeavors to use, the contents of any wire, oral, or electronic communication" knowing it was obtained illegally. [E.A.] Maybe it all depends on what the uses of "uses" are! ... Did I bury the lede? ...

Update: Actually, [say the pros at the Volokh Conspiracy](#), it depends on whether they were cell calls or cordless calls! Gerth and Van Natta say "cell." I don't think Hillary can take much comfort in Volokh's analysis. ... 5:15 P.M.
[link](#)

It looks like the Ron Burkle-Rupert Murdoch Pincer Movement to Control All Media for Hillary has [hit another snag](#). ...[via [Gawker](#)] ... Update: But it's made an [even bigger advance](#). ...[via [Drudge](#)] 4:26 P.M.

Weak point? Sen. Saxby Chambliss, one of [Mark Krikorian's](#) and [Michelle Malkin's](#) "**Amnesty** Republicans," [appears to be](#) vulnerable to a challenge from an enforcement-first Democrat. The Democrat in question says: ...

"Clearly, a lot of it has to do with Saxby not being in touch with Georgians, and the prime example is the immigration issue."

FYI, Sen. Chambliss' quick, handy email feedback form is [here](#). ... 3:58 P.M.

Bush's Domestic Iraq, cont.: In today's WSJ, Jeb Bush and Ken Mehlman [defend the Senate immigration bill](#) [\$] in part on the grounds that it will enable Republicans to capture the Latino vote. This is largely a fantasy, as [Heather Mac Donald argues](#). Anyway, if the GOP has to move left in Western states to compete accommodate a Dem-tending Latino vote (as it almost certainly will, whatever happens) is that such a bad thing? If you move the GOP left you might get a more appealing GOP--the GOP of Gov. Schwarzenegger, for example. ...

P.S.: There's something obnoxiously managerial and thuggish in declaring, as Bush and Mehlman do, that

"Doing nothing is not an option."

Endangered Pander

Yes it is. It usually is. The whole structure of our Constitution--which makes it very difficult to pass new laws--is based on the premise that doing nothing is not only an option but often the best option. For one thing, doing nothing let's you postpone a decision until you come up with a more prudent plan. Or a more prudent President. ...

P.P.S.: Isn't "doing nothing is not an option" what these same people said in the 2002 sales campaign for the Iraq War? Doesn't "doing nothing" look like a pretty good option, in retrospect?

Spelling is an option too! It's Sen. Johnny Isakson, not "Isaacson." ... He sells out to the Bushes and this is the respect he gets! ...

Bull---t Reminder: Bush and Mehlman say

Until and unless security improves on the border, the temporary worker program and "Z" visa provision for three-year work permits will not be implemented.

But under the bill illegal immigrants would immediately be legalized as "probationary" Z-visa applicants, before any of the border-security "triggers" are met. That's why yesterday's Fred Barnes proposal to toughen the "triggers" (which currently hinge on deployment of resources, not actual improvement in border security) is a scam too. The "triggers" don't trigger the legalization. It happens anyway. (And you don't have to pay the fine first either.) ...

Closer: Doing nothing is an option--but not the only option! And hope is not a plan! If you want to do something, here is that Senate contact list again. ... 12:33 P.M. [link](#)

Hey there, gorgeous! I've been vetted! Presidential candidate Gov. Bill Richardson has defended his rep against those "so far"-unfounded rumors by saying " The Kerry people vetted me for vice president." They did! Here's Kerry campaign strategist Bob Shrum:

Richardson's prospects were shadowed by alleged womanizing. Publicly reluctant, he coveted the publicity of being considered, but withdrew before the process was finished.

11:21 A.M.

Wonkette, Asleep at Switch: Headline on The Politico's "Mike's 'Must Reads'"--

Why Cougars are needed in Iraq

P.S.: We think we know a distinguished lawmaker who might help! ... 10:51 A.M.

Wednesday, May 30, 2007

That just means we're more courageous! A new Scott Rasmussen poll finds that the Senate "comprehensive" immigration bill is still unpopular--48% against, 26% for. As he notes, if it were popular Bush wouldn't be running around talking about the need for "courage." ... P.S.: Only 16% believe it will reduce illegal immigration. ... P.P.S.: You can, of course, eliminate the pollster middleman and contact your senators directly. Most of them foolishly provide handy email forms. Here's a contact list. ... 9:22 A.M.

Tuesday, May 29, 2007

"Strange New Respect" is Tom Bethell's term for the love showered by the MSM on conservatives who move to the left. So what's the term for when the MSM pretends that conservatives are showering love on a veteran liberal for helping them move left? Strange New Respect by Proxy? In any case, here it is. ... 11:57 P.M.

Today, President Bush said his comprehensive immigration plan makes it "more likely we can enforce our border." Only "more likely"? Why the doubt? After all, the bill specifically provides for "4 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles" for the Southern border! And illegal immigrants don't get the new Z-visas until those unmanned

Endangered Pander

aerial vehicles are deployed! That's one of the "enforcement benchmarks" Bush boasted about. ... P.S.:OK, actually the illegals become legal immediately, [as "probationary" Z-visa applicants](#). But ... hey, the bipartisan authors of the "grand bargain" didn't stop at three unmanned aerial surveillance craft. They have four! Sen. Kyl is one tough negotiator. ...

Update: [Mark Steyn reacts](#) to Bush's criticism of those who only look at "a narrow slice" of the bill:

Speaking for myself, I'm not looking at "a narrow slice of it" but only at its first and most important consequence: The conferring of instant open-ended legal residency and employment rights on just about anybody on the planet who wants them under a visa that, while technically "probationary", will in practice be all anybody ever needs because (aside from its other benefits) it removes any possibility of deportation. After that's gone into effect, the "narrow slices" and "little aspects" in Section 739(f) won't matter.

P.S.: Isn't Bush actually hurting his cause by raising the visibility of the immigration bill over the Memorial Day recess? I thought they were trying to sneak this thing in under the radar, with Fox doing its part by virtually banning the subject. ... What's more, have any of Bush's recent efforts at road-show salesmanship--regarding Iraq, or Social Security reform, or the 2006 mid-terms--had any success? I don't think so. Why then, has Bush made himself conspicuous defending the immigration "grand bargain." Answer: Because one of the insane, Chalabi-esque fantasies behind this bill is the idea that [it will produce more net Latino votes for Republicans](#). In order to establish this hitherto nonexistent GOP bond with Hispanics, Bush must cast himself as the Man Who Legalized the Illegals. He needs his Abe Lincoln moment, or else all his reform has done is added millions of voters from a traditionally Democratic immigrant group to the rolls. Hence, he has to become a prominent defender of the bill even if that makes the bill less likely to pass.

P.P.S.: The "instant" nature of the legalization seems also calculated to produce a Lincoln moment, a day of joyous emancipation, dancing and celebration in Aztlan that will be remembered in future decades. Why else rush the process by letting legalization precede the "triggers" and [allowing only one business day](#) for a background check? ... 3:16 P.M. [link](#)

ETP RIP: [Is HuffPo's Eat the Press really dead?](#) Arianna? I liked Eat the Press--it had its own quirky style. ... [This item isn't about comprehensive immigration reform--ed Sorry.It won't happen again.] ...1:17 P.M.

Linda Chavez: 'Status Quo OK!' Even Linda Chavez--after she's through [declaring that opponents of Bush's semi-amnesty are all anti-Latino racists](#)**--goes off-message by admitting thatnot passing an immigration bill, and leaving the "problem" unsolved, wouldn't be so bad:

The status quo -- largely turning a blind eye toward the 12 million illegal aliens who work, pay taxes and keep their noses clean, while stepping up border enforcement and selective internal enforcement -- may not be the worst possible outcome in the current debate on immigration reform.

Yep. ... Next, supporters of legalization will start [admitting that "amnesty" is an accurate word!](#) ...

**--That is not really an overstatement. Here's Chavez:

But we need to quit pretending that the "No Amnesty" crowd is anything other than what it is: a tiny group of angry, frightened and prejudiced loudmouths backed by political opportunists who exploit them.

It's good to get this sort of comprehensivist venom out in the open, so society can combat it. ...

P.S.: If they're playing the "racist" card already--and it's not just Chavez, I'm told even O'Reilly was echoing this talking point--doesn't that mean they sense they might be in trouble? ... 12:39 P.M.

Beats "sex": "Immigration" is [#1 on the New York Times "most searched" list](#), measured over the last 24 hours and over the last 7 days. ... To readers and editors who tell me I haven't been posting enough on this popular subject, all I can say is, "I hear you." ... 12:14 P.M.

Endangered Pander

Monday, May 28, 2007

There's a job for him at Fox: George Stephanopoulos [stages an exciting debate](#) between a supporter of comprehensive immigration reform and ... a supporter of comprehensive immigration reform! 10:43 P.M.

The moral majesty of John Murtha ([asked about possible violence and killing in Iraq if the U.S. withdraws](#)):

I am convinced that it won't be any worse than it is now, and if it is worse they will settle it themselves.

Is that what Democrats say about Darfur? And in Darfur, of course, the U.S. didn't arguably incur a moral obligation by invading the country. ... 10:10 P.M. [link](#)

Cheering, please: What if they [raised the minimum wage](#) and nobody paid much attention? Well, they did, by more than two bucks (to \$7.25). Isn't that a significant Democratic victory? I'm [looking for the triumphalism](#) on Daily Kos but can't find it. It didn't even [make the NYT front page](#). ... P.S.: This means it's not a "Do-Nothing Congress" anymore, no? Sorry, [Mr. Cass](#). ... 9:52 P.M. [link](#)

He clearly [caught the ball](#). ... [via [Drudge](#)] 9:37 P.M.

"[I]n interviews with more than a dozen soldiers in this 83-man unit over a one-week period"--[New York Times](#): I'm willing to believe U.S. soldiers in Iraq are disillusioned, but "more than a dozen" does not seem like a large number. ... 12:31 A.M.

The Class of 2007: The proposed Kyl-McCain-Kennedy immigration deal would more or less instantly legalize illegals who came here before January 1 of this year. What about the illegals who arrive after that? I'd thought it was a good joke when [Rich Lowry asked](#), "What does McCain want to do, deport them all?" But Clive Crook of National Journal [argues the post-January illegals will almost immediately become a problem](#) even if everything goes as planned:

Tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands, of new illegal immigrants have arrived since then. Thus each passing month adds to the numbers that the law insists must be sent home -- and the number is going to keep on rising, even if the pace slows once the new border measures are up and running. ... [snip]

So consider. One of the things the bill purports to recognize is that mass deportation of the 12 million illegal immigrants thought to be in the country is both impractical and undesirable (not least because of the effects on the U.S. economy). But is the mass deportation of, say, a million immigrants, or 2 million, much more practical or desirable? This is the outcome that the bill implicitly envisages even if, in every other respect, all goes to plan. Multiply that by two, on a very conservative estimate, for the illegal immigrants already here who opt not to apply for legal status under the terms of the new law. Add a hundred thousand a year, maybe, for new illegal immigrants who manage to slip through even after the border has been strengthened. In other words, suppose the bill is enacted: Ten years from now, what has been gained?

Two answers:

1) Some post-January illegals won't find it hard to trump up the two documents--e.g., ["sworn affidavits from nonrelatives"](#)--necessary to pass as pre-January illegals. Problem solved! (As President Bush declared last week, ["There is a document forgery industry in America."](#) Does he think it's going to go away because he gives them a different set of documents to forge?)

2) Of course the remaining post-January illegals won't be deported, any more than all the current pre-January illegals will have to be deported if Congress doesn't pass the "comprehensive" bill. They will live "in the shadows." Then, in 10 years, with millions of new illegal shadow-dwellers--way more the Crook's "hundred thousand a year," if things don't go according "to plan" but rather according to recent precedent--there will be responsible bipartisan proposals, which you would be a yahoo to oppose, for another semi-amnesty. Potential illegals know this, one reason why they will keep coming. (That's the [pattern after amnesties](#), it seems). ...

Endangered Pander

Praxis Reminder: Should you wish to try to forestall this irrevocable legislative disaster (or encourage it, I guess) [here is a list of Senate phone numbers and email forms](#) (via [Hewitt](#)). This be the week. ... 2:37 A.M.
[link](#)

Sunday, May 27, 2007

Why the L.A. Times is doomed: The following teaser appears, not on the front page, but at the bottom of the first page of the B section in today's Los Angeles Times.

Lindsay Lohan arrested The actress, 20, is arrested on suspicion of drunk driving after hitting a curb and shrubbery in Beverly Hills. B3

P.S.: By the time LA residents got up to get the Sunday paper, the Lohan story had already led Drudge and been replaced by a fresher bit of news. Meanwhile, the New York Post featured an inch-and-a-half headline, plus picture, on its tabloid front page:

LINDSAY DRUG SHOCK Stash found after DUI bust

That's the New York Post of the same day as the LAT, even though the story happened in L.A. and the Post is produced in New York. ... The Post account is also [juicier](#). ...

P.P.S.: The LAT did finally have a relatively [detailed piece](#) on the horrifying hammer attack by one student on another at the #1 L.A. private prep school, Harvard-Westlake. Times editors gave it a characteristically riveting headline: "Attack raises doubts at school."** ... [Fifty-seven buyouts](#) is not enough! ...

**--There was no evidence in the story of the attack raising doubts at the school. It was just too dull a head to pass up! 8:51 P.M. [link](#)

Those Irish election results in full through Irish eyes at [Slugger O'Toole](#). ... 7:44 P.M.

U.S. insistence on aerial spraying of poppy fields in Afghanistan still seems crazy to me. How about this deal: The U.S. agrees to forego spraying if anti-Bush journalists agree to not then write ["See, they're growing poppies! America is failing!"](#) stories. ... [via [Andrew Stuttaford at The Corner](#)] ... See also [Hitchens](#). ... 12:43 P.M.

If the relentless, semi-desperate Bush White House spin on immigration has even [alienated Powerline](#), maybe [John Podhoretz is right](#): Who's Bush going to rely on to back him on Iraq in September? Teddy Kennedy? ... Old proverb: Man who dissemble about immigration bill may also dissemble about Middle East military venture! Just sayin'. ... 2:04 A.M.

"It's Not True. It's Not True. It's Not True. It's Old News': Classic Clinton strategy for dealing with scandal, [now applied to Hillary bios](#). ... P.S.: However much Carl Bernstein's book may [question Hillary's judgment](#), you can't say she made the wrong decision when (as Bernstein reports) [she decided not to give Bill a divorce](#) when he fell in love with a power company executive. If she'd said 'yes,' she'd now be a high-powered lobbyist for Wal-Mart. ... P.P.S.: Seems like new news to me. ... 12:36 A.M.

Fox Shocks, Blocks Vox: Immigration writer [Conor Friedersdorf says](#) Fox News is dead to him!

Someone possessed of far less knowledge than I can see that right now is a crucial time for the immigration debate. If this once-a-generation legislation passes, it will forever alter the face of the United States, for better or worse; it is hard to imagine a topic where legislative efforts are less reversible. Furthermore, this is a topic of significant interest to the Fox News demographic, populist conservatives who care a lot about illegal immigration, the national security ramifications of loose border security and the threat posed by complicated, little understood legislation passed without public support or input.

Endangered Pander

So is Fox News going all out on immigration coverage? No! ... [E.A.]

12:01 A.M.

Saturday, May 26, 2007

Fox Weekend: Anything But Amnesty! I've now watched a couple of hours of Fox News Channel coverage, and Bush loyalists worried about anti-amnesty anger on the right will be pleased: The network's Pravda-like, immigration-bill blackout continues! Lots of discussion of Iraq, and Rosie, and old WWI munitions in Surf City, N.J., and Rosie. And Rosie! My favorite was the thumbsucker: "Can You Hurt Your Career Defending President Bush?" Not on Fox. Even if it means abandoning the network's traditional role as a voice for conservatives shut out of the MSM. ...

Any minute now I expect them to start playing somber classical music. ... 12:31 P.M.

The Right Against Fox! Freepers are rumbling. ... 7:43 A.M.

Friday, May 25, 2007

Second Bite That NYT-CBS poll purporting to show support for the Kyl-Kennedy semi-amnesty isn't as bad as I thought. It's worse! Here's the key question, which pulled a 67% "favor" response--

63. Would you favor or oppose allowing illegal immigrants who came into the country before January to apply for a four-year visa that could be renewed, as long as they pay a \$5,000 fine, a fee, show a clean work record and pass a criminal background check? [E.A.]

1) The question says that if illegals pay the fine, the fee, etc. they can "apply" for a four year visa. That suggests that even after the fine, etc. there is some discretion to turn down the "application"--the way other visa applications are turned down. No. In the proposals being considered, if you satisfy the fine, fee, and background check requirements, etc., you get the visa. You don't get "to apply." An ordinarily ill-informed respondent just hearing this question might easily think it was a whole other sort of program being considered--something like, 'Sure, they can apply and we'll take the ones we want--and it's only for four years, so we can always deny the renewals.'

2) A "four-year visa that could be renewed" sounds mighty temporary, sort of like a tourist visa or some other visas that foreigners have. It's not. It can be renewed until the visa-holder dies. It's permanent. ...

P.S.: Does the average poll respondent even know what a "visa" is? I'm not sure I do. Why not be honest and say something like, "Would you favor giving them legal status that would allow them to stay and work in the country"? Instead, the NYT-CBS pollsters adopted the deceptive euphemisms of the proposed law (which must have tested well or else the proponents would have come up with other deceptive euphemisms). ... 5:40 P.M. link

Paranoia Update--Fox Edition: Allahpundit says I'm engaging in "conspiracy fantasies" in suggesting that Fox News Channel is carrying water for Bush (instead of conservatives) by avoiding too much immigration and amnesty talk in the runup to the Memorial Day weekend. I don't know! Here's an email I got yesterday from a supporter of the immigration bill:

For us Pro- Comprehensive immigration Republicans I agree with you something is going on at FOX. First my good old Ole Miss Boy who is anchoring at 6pm .He barely mentioned the immigration fight and when he does it is all good news. Then I turn on the FACTOR and Bill is not there!! Better yet [snip] Michelle Makin is not the Fill in Anchor. I just saw former Congressman something of the other (I think he ran for Prez) shut down the Republican strategist when she starting talking about it. Awesome.

What Hannity and Colmes be like? After that it is smooth sailing.

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Well, what did Hannity and Colmes talk about last night? Iraq, Al Qaeda,** Iran, The View and Michael Moore! Ann Coulter, who was on the first segment, rebelled and brought up immigration anyway. They never went back to her-- and started talking about John Edwards' hair. ...

**--Especially those grisly Al Qaeda torture drawings, [captured two weeks ago](#), that just happened to be released for yesterday's papers. [Nurse!-ed] ... 2:32 P.M. [link](#)

Killer Amendment Contest: I don't quite understand how the comprehensive "[p.o.s.](#)" Senate immigration bill could be [killed in the amendment process](#). A "killer amendment" would have to be appealing enough to draw a majority vote, yet so unappealing that a larger bill including it would be voted down (even though the killer amendment might always be reversed in conference). ... Maybe it makes more sense if you look at the Kabuki, and at the cumulative effect of alienating small blocs of senators: A killer amendment, in this theory, is an amendment that it's hard for a majority of politicians to go on record against (even if they hate it) but that gives a large group of other politicians who'd secretly like to vote against the bill a defensible excuse for doing so.** ...

If readers know more about this "killer amendment" business, or have amendments to suggest, email me. One reader offers this proposal: Make legalized [illegals](#) ineligible to vote (maybe for 10 years or so). Felons can't vote, after all, and the public [says it wants border violators prosecuted](#). ... That seems like too many millions of legal workers stripped of the right to vote to me, but it might be a hard one to vote against, yet it would give lots of Dems an excuse to oppose the bill. Other nominees accepted. ... 12:09 P.M. [link](#)

That NYT: Pollster [Scott Rasmussen argues](#) that the NYT-CBS poll is consistent with his own findings of opposition to the Senate bill--but potential support for some sort of pragmatic compromise involving enforcement plus a "path to citizenship."

However, while 65% [in [Rasmussen's poll](#)] were willing to support such a compromise, only 26% support the legislation currently before the Senate.

The gap between the 65% potential support for a compromise and the 26% actual support for the Senate bill is due to two factors. First, the debate in the Senate has focused on how to legalize the status of illegal aliens. For most Americans, that's missing the point (just 29% of American voters see legalizing the status of illegal aliens as a Very Important issue).

Second, there is enormous skepticism about the government commitment to enforcing the borders (as the Times survey noted, only 14% believe the government is doing all it can at this time). To most voters, [immigration reform](#) is all about border control. Until voters are convinced that the enforcement is both real and effective, there will be [no](#) popular support for reform. [E.A.]

I tend to think the NYT's questionable Question #63 finding (see below) is a little more inconsistent with Rasmussen's results than that. But Rasmussen's conclusion is similar to [Andy McCarthy's](#)--it's all about lack of trust in the enforcement piece, and an unwillingness to take the "big risk" that "the current 12 to 20+ million illegal alien population could easily swell to two or more times that amount if this isn't done right." ...

P.S.: Here's [what an actual pol says](#)--

Sen. Jon Kyl of Arizona, the lead Republican negotiator who has come under heavy attack, conceded that a Rasmussen poll showing just 26 percent of the voters surveyed favor passage of the Senate bill is probably accurate. [E.A.]

Of course, Kyl's now posing as the courageous cooperator who's willing to tell his constituents to cram it. A negative poll result isn't off message for him.** Still ...

**--It's the Reverse Howell Raines Fallacy: The great and [good](#) American people are wrong and we need brave Beltway politicians to stand up to them. If they hate the deal it must be sound!... 9:51 A.M. [link](#)

Endangered Pander

That NYT: It seems to me the main problem with [today's NYT-CBS immigration poll](#) are

a) Before it ever asks the key question (#63) about semi-**amnesty**, it asks question #61, which implies there are only two choices: giving **illegals** a "chance to ... eventually apply" for legal status, or deportation. The public clearly doesn't like mass deportation, so two questions later, when they're asked in detail about the "Z-visa," they may be inclined to approve. A fair poll would give respondents the option of leaving the status quo alone--letting **illegals** stay in the shadows, etc.

b) I don't think it's fresh news that when voters are given elaborate descriptions of the requirements for semi-**amnesty** ("pay a \$5,000 fine, a fee, show a clean work record and pass a criminal background check") they say, 'sure'. **No** other alternatives are given in this question.

c) As [the Times itself notes](#), it never asked voters simply what they thought of, say, 'the bill being considered by the Senate.' Voters may have heard descriptions of the bill that cast it in a positive or negative light. It's that bill and those descriptions the Senators are going to be responsible for, not a NYT hypothetical not-quite-the-bill. ... Indeed, before the NYT poll asks voters Question #63, it softens them up by floating a legalization proposal (in Question #61) that's significantly different from--and tougher than--the Senate bill. The senate bill doesn't just give **illegals** "a chance to ... eventually apply for legal status". It immediately gives them legal status. The bill doesn't apply to "most" **illegals** (implying some sort of screening process). It applies to virtually all **illegals**. And, [as Krikorian notes](#), it doesn't apply to **illegals** who have "lived and worked in the **United States** for at least two years." It applies to all who snuck into the country before the beginning of 2007--five months ago.

d) Point (c) is especially a problem because while voters may--let's use hypothetical numbers--approve of all the main provisions by a 60-30 margin, that doesn't mean they approve of the compromise combining those provisions. If the 30 percent who oppose the semi-**amnesty** provision are a different 30 percent than the 30 percent who oppose the guest worker program, and they all feel adamant about it, then it's possible 60 percent oppose the compromise that includes both provisions, **no**?

See also [Allahpundit's analysis](#), and [pollster Scott Rasmussen's](#). ... Update: Also [Mark Krikorian](#). ...

P.S.: It's also possible, of course, that the majority of voters foolishly do support the Senate compromise. I don't want to slip into the Howell Raines Fallacy of assuming the great and **good** American people must agree with me. The great and **good** American people are sometimes naive, ill-informed, or just all wet. But I don't think the NYT poll demonstrates that, in this case. ... 2:19 A.M. [link](#)

Big Dirty Ball of Mischief! [Peggy Noonan](#):

Naturally I hope the new immigration bill fails. It is less a bill than a big dirty ball of mischief, malfeasance and mendacity, with a touch of class malice, and it's being pushed by a White House that is at once cynical and inept. The bill's Capitol Hill supporters have a great vain popinjay's pride in their own higher compassion. They are inclusive and you're not, you cur, you gun-totin' truckdriver's-hat-wearin' yahoo. [E.A.]

She also notes--in what seems an actual fresh point--that an enforcement-first strategy which actually sealed the borders but failed to offer legalization wouldn't hurt the **illegals** who are already here--it would help them, by tightening the low-end of the labor market and raising their wages and income along with the wages of legal workers.

Let's take time and find out if the immigrants who are here see their wages click up and new benefits kick in as the endless pool stops expanding. It would be **good** to see them gain.

If semi-**amnesty** is followed, as expected, by a new wave of **illegals**, that will lower the incomes of the **illegals** already here, whether or not they take advantage of the Z-visa. ...

P.S.: See also [another sensible Andy McCarthy post](#), a probably ill-fated attempt to find common ground, which includes the following:

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As a human being, I want to support legalization, even though everything in my experience tells me it is always a mistake to reward illegal behavior, and the equities tell me that (a) the illegals have chosen to be illegal so it's not unfair to make them live with that choice, and (b) legalization would be a slap in the face to the people who have respected our laws and tried to immigrate lawfully.

Despite those two weighty considerations, I think I could swallow hard and go along. Except for one thing: I don't believe the government is serious about enforcement. I've been in government, so I don't doubt their good faith. I don't doubt that they really hope and intend to do a better job. I just won't believe they'll follow through for any sustained amount of time until they actually do.

1:03 A.M.

Thursday, May 24, 2007

This [Hotline observation](#) rings true:

Many anti-comp Republicans are faking their opposition to the issue and have told their corporate fundraisers and lobbyist patrons that they privately hope a bill will pass. These anti-comp Republicans have to pretend to be in the anti-amnesty camp because they'd suffer politically because of it.

At least they say they're faking their opposition when they talk to their "lobbyist patrons." If they did what the lobbyists wanted, and supported the bill, would that be authentic? Or would it be sucking up to "corporate fundraisers"? (Eh, [Senator Lott](#).) They probably tell the bill's opponents that they are faking when they say they're faking their opposition. At some point the search for authenticity in state-of-the-art politicians becomes fruitless. A fake "no" vote counts as much as a heartfelt "no" vote. ... 12:01 P.M.

Paranoid's Corner II: I'm now so obsessed with the Senate "p.o.s." immigration bill that I think all the news the Bush administration is making--from the [President's unusual press conference](#) to his statements on Iran and Iraq to the release of that [Osama-Zawahiri message](#)--isn't really designed to influence the public's views on Iran and Iraq or Al Qaeda. It's designed to take up media space over Memorial Day so there's less room for angry opposition to the President's immigration bill! It's so obvious.... And why did that [volcano erupt](#) today? You think that was an accident? ** ...

**--OK, why did Fox News have to cover that volcano erupting? As I said, conservatives can't count on Fox to keep the immigration debate boiling. Fox isn't the conservative cable channel. It's the Bush cable channel. Try to find the immigration bill controversy on the [Fox home page](#). (It's there, but you have to look way down. Even then it's spun deceptively in a pro-Bush way: "As plan moves forward in the Senate will House sink it?" As if it's already a done deal in the Senate and only those Pelosi Dems stand in the way. ...) 11:41 A.M.

Wednesday, May 23, 2007

'What are you going to do, deport them all?' George Will's [answer](#):

Treat the problem of the 12 million with benign neglect. Their children born here are American citizens; the parents of these children will pass away.

If border-enforcement can be made to work (and the implausible premise of the "grand bargain" is that it can--indeed, that it will work so well it can hold off a new wave of illegals lured by amnesty) the problem of the 12 million diminishes gradually, steadily over time. Eventually, it disappears. The Bush administration, which always gins up a "crisis" before its big policy pushes, doesn't like to dwell on this point. ... 11:57 P.M.

Long weekend: Maybe the immigration bill could die in the House (if Pelosi wants it to) or the Senate later this year (if the bill, after it comes back from the House and conference, is too liberal, for example). Maybe not. But it's pretty clear that the best--and perhaps only--time to derail immigration semi-amnesty is now, before the Senate ever votes on its initial "grand bargain." Risk averse politicians, especially Dems who weren't in the Senate in 2006 to vote on

Endangered Pander

last year's bill, will naturally not want to vote either way on such a charged issue. A pro-legalization vote gives GOPs an issue to run against them on. An anti-legalization vote annoys Latinos and businessmen and maybe party elders.

The goal of the bill's foes should be to give these senators their wish, which would happen if Sen. Reid decides he doesn't have 60 votes next week and pulls the bill rather than put it to the test. But once senators have voted for it the first time, they've opened themselves to attack and may figure they might as well vote for it again.

Kate O'Beirne, an opponent of the bill, [reports pessimistically](#) that as things stand it will pass with 60 votes. That makes what happens over this next weekend, when the pols go home and meet with constituents, crucial. I hope Senator Brown of Ohio, for one, as lots of town meetings scheduled. ... 9:23 P.M. [link](#)

From this morning's [WaPo account](#) of the "guest worker" debate

Opponents of the program said it would depress wages of [U.S.](#) workers while creating an underclass of poorly paid migrants with [no](#) access to the protections of citizenship.

Proponents said wages are already being depressed by illegal immigrants.

Well all right then! ... [Aren't proponents saying that once the [illegals](#) are legal, stern enforcement measures elsewhere in the bill will keep out new [illegals](#)-ed Sure. But a) why not just do those enforcement measures, which [seem to be what the voters want](#) and which [the administration says are working](#); and b) it's not much of an advertisement for the guest worker program that it will keep wages depressed to the level that illegal immigration has already depressed them. We might want to, you know, let them rise a bit!... 9:08 P.M. [link](#)

Alterman [for the border fence!](#)

Why are lefties who complain about enforcement of the law so eager to ally themselves with exactly the same position embraced by the editorial page of The Wall Street Journal? And why do you think lawyers and doctors, for instance, are so [good](#) at getting laws written to prevent immigrants from employing their qualifications achieved abroad to compete with them here, while unskilled American workers must see their wages depressed by an overcrowded labor market ...?

Likewise, the interesting erosion in support for the Kyl-Kennedy instant-legalization bill will come on the left, if it comes. Read [this David Sirota post against "triangulation"](#) and see if he isn't this close to adding immigration to the list of issues on which Democratic party elders are joining a bipartisan Beltway elite in selling out the Dems' labor and lower-income constituents. ... P.S.: The left is right about the temporary "guest worker" program of which Sen. Kyl is so proud. Why shouldn't foreigners who legally come here to work eventually have a chance to become full-fledged citizens? That's different than rewarding with instant legalization those who came here illegally. Kyl's magnificent bipartisan "grand bargain" has achieved the worst of both worlds (temporary second class status for legal immigrants, a huge semi-[amnesty](#) reward for illegal immigrants.) The common denominator is an erosion in the bargaining power of unskilled American workers. ... 1:37 P.M. [link](#)

Paranoid's Corner House Minority Leader [John Boehner on the Senate's immigration "grand bargain"](#)--

"I promised the President today that I wouldn't say anything bad about ... this piece of shit bill ..."

Hmm. So Bush is actively asking his GOP friends to tone down their criticism of the Sen. Kyl's wonderful bipartisan handiwork. Cut to FOX News Channel, which I watched for much of yesterday on a plane--and which wasn't nearly as rabble-rousing on the anti-[amnesty](#) front as you'd expect a rabble-rousing conservative cable channel to be. [Ramesh Ponnuru at The Corner noticed this too](#). Maybe the White House made the same request of Fox it made of Boehner. Certainly this is a crucial weekend for the p.o.s. bill--if Senators go home and get enough grief from their constituents, the alleged 60-70 vote majority might disappear quickly. ... Am I saying that Roger Ailes, head of Fox News, is susceptible to guidance from the White House? Yes! Conservatives shouldn't trust Fox any more than

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liberals do. ... Update 5/23: Tonight Hannity & Colmes opened with ... the catfight at The View! I rest my case. ...1:01 P.M. [link](#)

Conservatives who (rightly) oppose the immigration deal should make sure they enact the House Democrats minimum wage increase, no? That would give Nancy Pelosi something to brag about when she's accused of running a "do-nothing" Congress, and lower the chances that she'll decide to "do something" by passing a Senate semi-amnesty bill even if there are few House Republicans to lend it bipartisan cover. ... 12:45 A.M.

Monday, May 21, 2007

We're not going to run people down! And, by the way, our opponents are bigots! "Comprehensive immigration reform" is one of those issues that brings out the worst in people. Especially its proponents. Here's Sen. Lindsey Graham talking about the issue back in March, 2006, in [a clip dug up by Michelle Malkin](#):

We are going to solve this problem, we're not going to run people down, we're not gonna scapegoat people, we're gonna tell the bigots to shut up, and we're gonna get it right. [E.A.]

I detect a contradiction. ... P.S.: Remember when the respectable, bipartisan policy types routinely tarred those who favored welfare reform as bigots who scapegoated blacks and the poor? That didn't really work for them in the end, did it? ... 9:55 P.M.

Moose on Table ... : Bruce Kesler on an [explosive, time-bomb like issue](#) ticking underneath the official Democratic pro-legalization coalition in the immigration debate. ... 6:59 P.M.

Parachute Blues: McCain defends immigration bill fast track, [then is surprised when told](#) of the [removal of the back taxes requirement](#)! ... But I thought he [knew "more about immigration than anybody"](#) in the room where the bill was hammered out! ... P.S.: Even if they now stick the "back taxes" provision back in to avoid throwing what McCain calls "fuel on the fire," that's not the point. The point is that Bush has repeatedly used the "back taxes" argument to sell his plan, yet he took it out--in other words, you can't trust him to do anything he's promised to do when it comes to burdening illegal immigrants. As [Krikorian says](#),

the president is opposed [morally and emotionally repelled](#) by the idea of enforcing the border with Mexico. It's just uncompassionate, in his view, and nothing's going to change that ...

6:46 P.M.

Interesting non-Republican Senate [votes against taking up the immigration bill](#): Dorgan, Baucus, Tester, Sanders. ... P.S.: Candidates Clinton, Obama, Biden, and Dodd just happen to miss the vote. Kerry too. ... 3:11 P.M.

Bushie Sneer Humor of the Day: [Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff addresses immigration on CNN Friday--](#)

You know, Wolf, first, I understand there's some people who expect anything other than capital punishment is an amnesty.

Ha ha. Chertoff pledged to implement the proposed bill's complex, untried enforcement mechanisms with the same precision and efficiency that he and his agency displayed in the Katrina relief effort! ... 12:55 P.M. [link](#)

[Ezra Klein at TAPPED calls around to pro-"comprehensive" Dems](#) and explains, in effect, why opponents of Bush's "comprehensive" reform shouldn't count on Pelosi's House to kill it:

The folks I talked to believe this is the year. [Two years from now isn't an option](#). The particular political circumstances we're in are nearly unique: Bush has nothing left to lose but his involvement still provides cover for Republicans, Democrats can get an immigration bill without full ownership over it, the space is open for the subject because the President won't allow action on other liberal priorities and the Congress won't countenance any

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conservative agenda items, and so on. You have the [RNC defending a bill](#) that, were it offered under a Democratic president, they'd be tearing apart. Meanwhile, this just won't be a priority for the next president: President Democrat will want to do health care, not amnesty, and President Republican will want to get reelected someday. So this is the shot. [E.A.]

That means there will be tremendous pressure on Pelosi to go ahead with a bill providing semi-amnesty to illegals (the key Dem demand) even if she doesn't get the much-discussed "60 or 70" House GOP votes as cover. A desperate president will be cover enough. ... Indeed, Pelosi already backed off the "60 or 70" Republicans requirement yesterday on George Stephanopoulos' This Week.** ... If "enforcement first" forces want to kill the Bush semi-amnesty, the Senate is the best place, and now is the best time. But if they do kill it, it might go away for a long while. ... [via [Blogometer](#)]

Update: Instapundit [thinks different](#), arguing that anti-amnesty conservatives will get a better deal now than they will after they sit out the 2008 election and throw it to the Dems. But if they kill the bill now, and don't nominate McCain, maybe they won't sit out the 2008 election! Plus I think the circumstances Klein outlines above are fairly unusual. If "comprehensive" reform fails now, it may go away for a long time (like Nixon's s once-inevitable guaranteed income plan). Even if Dems win in 2008, why won't the next President take the easy (and better!) course--emphasize enforcement while kicking the legalization can down the road? In our two branch, two house system, those who wait until next year often find themselves waiting a long time. (Maybe the workings [Feiler Faster Thesis](#) will somehow result in speedier reconsideration of failed legislation--but I don't quite see how.) I urge Prof. Reynolds to go easy on the Nyquill!

**--Here's s the exchange on This Week:

STEPHANOPOULOS: One of your deputies, Congressman Rahm Emanuel has said this bill will be very difficult to pass without 60 to 70 Republican votes in the House. Is that the bar?

PELOSI: Well let's s put it this way, we would like to have strong bipartisan support for whatever we do. We don't want the Senate to use the 60 or 70 in the House as an excuse to do something that Democrats can't support. So let's s just say we want a bill that is comprehensive, that is bipartisan and that the president will sign.

12:16 P.M. [link](#)

Sunday, May 20, 2007

Read My Flips: **No** Back Taxes! ... If You're an Illegal Immigrant. President Bush in an [address from the Oval Office a year ago](#):

I believe that illegal immigrants who have roots in our country and want to stay should have to pay a meaningful penalty for breaking the law, to pay their taxes, to learn English, and to work in a job for a number of years. People who meet these conditions should be able to apply for citizenship ... [E.A.]

Forget that part about the taxes. The Bush administration actually [asked that the provision requiring payment of back taxes be dropped](#) from the bill, and it was taken out. Kennedy had it in! ...

P.S.: White House spokesman Scott Stanzel said:

Determining the past tax liability would have been very difficult and costly and extremely time consuming.

Try that "difficult and time consuming" excuse out on the IRS if you're a U.S. citizen and see how far it gets you. ...

P.P.S.: Will backers of "comprehensive" immigration reform continue to tout approving poll numbers from [polls that specifically cited the now-defunct "back taxes" requirement](#) before asking voters for their opinion about semi-amnesty? The CNN poll of May 4, 2007, for example, got a large favorable response when it asked if people favored

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"Creating a program that would allow illegal immigrants already living in the United States for a number of years to stay in this country and apply for U.S. citizenship if they had a job and paid back taxes." [E.A.]

I wonder what the response would be to a query about favoring

"Creating a program that would allow illegal immigrants already living in the United States for a number of years to stay in this country and apply for U.S. citizenship even if they don't pay back taxes."

Don't need no Mystery Pollster to answer that one. ... [\[via Corner\]](#) 12:17 A.M. [link](#)

Saturday, May 19, 2007

Why can't they focus on the wolf-donkey problem here at home? Nabokov was inspired to write Lolita after reading about an ape who'd been taught to draw but only made a picture of the bars of its cage. Recently, I received an emailed call to action regarding a caged wolf and donkey in Albania:

Apparently in Albania, some [deleted] has decided to keep a wolf and a donkey caged together in filthy conditions. The donkey was initially put in the cage for the wolf to eat, but they've instead become friends and are now miserable in the cage together.

[Says it all](#), no? ... Update: The donkey, but not the wolf, has been uncaged. That would seem a reasonable compromise. ... Unlike, say ... [oh, go ahead-ed] comprehensive immigration reform. ... 11:29 P.M.

Hunt in Morning, Fish in Afternoon: My friend Mary Battiata, who covered (among other things) the fall of Communism for the Washington Post, has produced a [second alt-country CD](#) of her songs with her band Little Pink. It's pretty great--every song is good, there are fast ones and slow ones, yet it has a distinct, of-a-piece sound. Not since Little Feat's Sailin' Shoes have I played a CD more or less continuously, start to finish, and never wanted to get up to take it off. (Even Leona Naess' I Tried to Rock You But You Only Roll, the previous champ, has one bad song; Steve Earle usually sticks a clinker in each half--and that's for his good albums. Rosie Thomas' When We Were Small opens with three songs so purely, wrenchingly sad I've never actually made it to song #4.) ... 11:05 P.M.

[Bloggingheads on](#) Mort Kondracke's "Plan B" for Iraq. ... 10:51 P.M.

The Shadows Aren't So Bad: At the Corner, Andy McCarthy [talks sense to John Podhoretz](#), who has an unattractive habit of sneering at the immigration yahoos and seems to think there just has to be an immigration bill--any bill--because ... well, it's hard to tell. Key McCarthy point: "It is not a crisis that millions of people who have chosen to live and work here illegally must live 'in the shadows.'" (That will be confirmed when, if the bill passes, millions decide they'd rather go on living in the shadows than pay the statutory fine.) ... 2:01 P.M.

Michael Yon with Marines on patrol in Anbar province, [emails Instapundit](#). Last line: "If the rest of Iraq looked like this, we could all come home!" ... 1:43 P.M.

On the heels of his triumphant announcement of a breakthrough "comprehensive" immigration deal, President Bush's support has ... ["fallen to the lowest level ever recorded"](#)! Pollster Scott Rassmussen notes:

The president's ratings have tumbled each time immigration reform dominates the news.

Using advanced, high-tech tools, Karl Rove has found the last pocket of support for Bush and destroyed it with laser-like efficiency. ... Update: See David Frum for eight (8) reasons why the immigration deal ["detonated the slow motion trigger on a Republican debacle in 2008."](#) Powerline [agrees](#), with one exception (it helps Romney). ... 1:25 P.M.

Don't Calm Down! On the [PBS NewsHour](#), David Brooks says the 70 Senate votes for the Kyl-Kennedy immigration "compromise" are "soft." Great. But opposition is soft too. For example, the National Review notes that Alabama

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[Sen. Jeff Sessions put out a statement saying he is "deeply concerned with the compromise" bill](#) and wants to look at the "details." Sessions shouldn't be "deeply concerned" with the compromise. He should be opposing the compromise. He knows enough now without looking at the "details." ... If Sessions (who eviscerated last year's "comprehensive" bill) doesn't take the lead in the Senate, who will? ... P.S.: "Soft" senators react to the public's reaction. This is so not the time for opponents to calm down. ... 2:37 A.M. [link](#)

Booker Prize: Ed Rollins and Arianna Huffington, [together again!](#) ... [For some of why this is a potentially tense pairing, click [here](#)] ... 2:01 A.M.

Friday, May 18, 2007

Burning at Both Ends: I think [AllahPundit misinterprets](#) my [earlier post](#) comparing the Kyl cave-in plan to Nixon's guaranteed income plan (FAP). I wasn't saying that the most legitimate left wing objections to the Kyl-Kennedy scheme--e.g., that it will unleash an un-blockable tide of amnesty-seeking illegals who will further bid down wages for lower-skilled Americans, increasing income inequality--are necessarily what can derail the plan. The Democratic objections that might derail it are mostly other sorts of objections, of the we-want-the-whole-loaf-and-think-we-can-get-it-in-2009 variety--lower fees for the "Z visa," more "chain migration," no guest worker program, etc. ... The liberal demands that derailed the Nixon guaranteed income plan weren't demands I have much sympathy for ("You can't force me to work," said a welfare mother to applause at a FAP-related hearing in 1970). But they derailed it just the same. ... I'm not predicting this will happen. Just saying it's possible. ...

P.S.: Jason Steck seems to think any plan rejected by "purists" on left and right must be OK. But not all "moderate" plans are sensible! FAP was a centrist idea rejected by purists of left and right, yet it was a bad idea. Same with Kyl-Kennedy. Just as defeating FAP set the stage for a better plan also rejected by purists of left and right--the 1996 welfare reform that stressed work over guarantees of cash--defeating Kyl-Kennedy can set the stage for a better bipartisan plan (stressing effective enforcement measures before guaranteeing semi-amnesty). ... [via [RCP's blogfight page](#)] 11:50 P.M.

Spiegelman Scores! If Rupert Murdoch [has a shot](#) at wresting the Wall Street Journal from the Bancroft family--despite a two-tier stock structure designed to give the family a majority of the voting rights--why can't somebody else wrest the New York Times from the Sulzberger family (protected by a similar two tier structure).

[Bloggingheads asks](#); Roger Lowenstein, [criticizing both papers' two-tier structure in the New Republic](#), doesn't answer. ...

P.S.: Lowenstein is pretty unconvincing about the plight of the poor disenfranchised Class A shareholder in these family-controlled companies. They knew they weren't getting meaningful voting rights when they bought their stock, no? The problem with the Sulzbergers isn't that they don't make enough money--who cares?--but that they've installed hapless scion Pinch, who's encouraged mindless Upper West Side prejudices to shape the paper's news coverage (a smaller problem, I admit, since Howell Raines' departure, and since some of those mindless Upper West Side prejudices--i.e., about George Bush's inadequacy--have proved accurate). ...

P.P.S.: Ian Spiegelman's [sensational charges](#), at least [partially confirmed by the New York Post itself](#), suggest again why [Murdoch isn't someone you want running a paper](#) either, even if his stockholders do well. ... So well timed! Sorry, ETP. You picked a bad day for the [contrarian Murdoch defense](#). (I'm counter-contrarian on this one. That's the most contrarian of all!) ... 10:39 P.M. [link](#)

Don't Count on Pelosi: Opponents of the [GOP cave-in on immigration](#) would be fools, I think, to rely on Nancy Pelosi's House to kill the legislation. Pelosi has allegedly demanded that the White House produce 70 Republican "yes" votes as bipartisan cover before she brings the bill to the floor. (In [today's NYT](#), Rahm Emanuel says "60 or 70.") What are the bill's opponents going to do when Pelosi decides that, hey, 20 or 30 Republican votes are enough? [Hugh Hewitt's instinct](#)--to try to stall the bill now, in the Senate--seems sound. ... P.S.: If I were a paranoid, which I am, I'd even think that Pelosi's heavily-publicized riff about needing 70 GOP votes in her chamber is a trick to sucker Republican senators into supporting the bill with the (false) hope that the 70 votes won't be there and it will be blocked in the House. ... 1:45 P.M. [link](#)

Endangered Pander

[Peggy Noonan](#): "Why shouldn't liberalism get a shot? Could they mess up more?" 4:29 A.M.

GOP Immigration Cave-In, Part II: The GOP's lead Senate negotiator, Sen. Jon Kyl, appears to have caved on the crucial issue of legalization (for existing illegal immigrants) in exchange for a promise of tougher enforcement to prevent another, future wave of illegals.

Unfortunately, the legalization in the Senate's compromise would be immediate--see [below](#). The "enforcement" part would follow, in the form, [WaPo reports](#), of "18,000 new Border Patrol agents and four unmanned aerial vehicles," etc. There appears to be no requirement that these added assets would actually accomplish the job of preventing more illegal immigration. At least in Iraq Bush is asking to be judged by the result of his surge, not by his mere deployment of more troops.

It's not even clear the new agents will be assigned to enforce the immigration laws. Here is a [CNN report](#), citing Homeland Security Sec. Michael Chertoff on the subject:

But Chertoff told CNN that the bill would help him better focus his resources.

"Right now, I've got my Border Patrol agents and my immigration agents chasing maids and landscapers. I want them to focus on drug dealers and terrorists. It seems to me, if I can get the maids and landscapers into a regulated system and focus my law enforcement on the terrorists and the drug dealers, that's how I get a safe border."

Hmm. Future illegal immigrants will be "maids and landscapers" too. Is Chertoff going to use the Border Patrol to look for them (and their law-breaking employers) or is he going to pull Border Patrol agents off the immigration beat in order to put them on the anti-drug smuggling and terrorism beats? If the Bush Administration is going to try to appease foes of legalization with a show of "enforcement" muscle, it could at least get its story straight. ...

P.S.: [Good Rich Lowry line](#)--

But the 12 million illegals here before January would get probationary legal status immediately when the bill passes. Effectively, that's amnesty. (It's unclear why illegals arriving here after January would be excluded so coldheartedly. What does McCain want to do, deport them all?)

4:07 A.M. [link](#)

Thursday, May 17, 2007

Fight It Like FAP? Something to encourage those who oppose the [Kyl-Kennedy compromise GOP cave-in](#) on immigration: This is a complex bill, with provisions opposed by the right (e.g., instant legalization) and provisions opposed by the left (e.g., a temporary guest worker program, potential shift toward favoring immigrants with skills more and family members less). It's not uncommon for a bill to ultimately fail because it loses votes on both ends--some legislators don't think it's "liberal" enough and some don't think it's "conservative" enough--even though the objections are contradictory. That's what happened, for example, in 1972 to Nixon's Family Assistance Plan (FAP)--a "grand bargain" that would have replaced welfare with a guaranteed income. FAP is eerily similar to Kyl-Kennedy: it too was a faux-solution to a big problem. It too was endorsed by virtually the entire respectable MSM-political establishment (and promoted by a president weakened by an unpopular war!). But it lost when faced with a strange bedfellows alliance of conservatives who didn't like the idea of guaranteeing everyone cash benefits and liberals who didn't think the benefits were generous enough. And after FAP lost, it went away and never came back. It's not inconceivable that the same thing will happen to Kyl-Kennedy ...

P.S.: And that's not even considering the many "left" objections that are in fact the same as the "right" objections--e.g., that the bill, by encouraging another flood of illegals, will drive down the wages of unskilled Americans. ... (See [this L.A.T. article](#) noting the initial opposition of Democratic senators Ben Nelson and Byron Dorgan.)

P.P. S.: A Full FAP strategy might require conservatives to figure out how to rile up, not just right wing anti-amnesty critics of the bill but also left wing immigrant-rights critics. Perhaps House Democrats could be subtly encouraged to

Endangered Pander

hold a large hearing, attended by activists from the undocumented community, at which spokespeople loudly demanded not just instant legalization but free instant legalization! (Speaker suggestion: Nativio Lopez.) They'll be making these demands soon enough. Why not now? ... They might also emphasize that they do not think they are immigrants at all--this is their homeland! We stole it from them. ... Not only would these hearings mobilize Latino opposition to the compromise, they might also turn off the rest of the country (much as some famous hearings featuring George Wiley's welfare rights activists soured the country on the guaranteed income). ...

Meanwhile: Mark Krikorian has [some simpler ideas](#) for opposing the bill. Ace of Spades is [a bit more ambitious](#). [via [Insta](#)] ...

**--This doesn't necessarily happen because poor political managers fail to find the centrist sweet spot. Sometimes there just isn't a position in the center that can win over enough legislators from the extremes. With FAP, for example, creating a guaranteed benefit generous enough to win over antipoverty Dems turned out to be impossibly expensive. FAP backers didn't fail to find the compromise solution. There was no solution. ... 11:51 P.M. [link](#)

'Everyone who was illegal is now ... legal.' The Corner [investigates and discusses](#) the gruesome details of the Kyl cave-in on immigration as they emerge. According to Rich Lowry, despite all the [deceptive rhetoric about a "borders first" approach](#), current illegal immigrants would apparently get [an immediate "probationary" card](#), making them immediately legal. That is why Sen. Kennedy (who supports legalization) could boast, at [the press conference on the deal](#), that

If this bill becomes law, it will provide an historic opportunity for millions of people right away. [E.A.]

P.S.: Captain Ed loyally defends the deal in [what may be one of the most unconvincing blog posts ever!](#)

Here's the problem with the hard-liner arguments, which amounts to "they'll never engage the border-security and workplace enforcement portions." Well, that could be true of any immigration bill, even if it completely matched the conservative position on immigration. It's an argument that only supports no action whatsoever on illegal immigration, including border controls.

That's silly. You could pass "the border-security and workplace enforcement portions" and then see if they worked--and tightened them if they didn't--before you went ahead with amnesty. ... Lowry, meanwhile, [defends Sen. Kyl, also unconvincingly](#). If Kyl had walked away from negotiations, would he really not bring along 39 other votes to block a "much worse" bill? There doesn't have to be a bill, remember. Bipartisan cooperative "action" isn't necessarily always a great thing (as the 1986 amnesty showed). The country is not in crisis, only Bush. The no-bill status quo, [Lowry's own magazine notes](#), has been moving in a good direction on immigration, with greater enforcement (and rising wages at the bottom). ...

P.P.S.: [Heather Mac Donald predicts](#) the effect of the immediate legalization will be to encourage more illegal immigrants to come here and create new 'facts on the ground' that will then have to be humanely and compassionately accommodated in another, future amnesty.

There is no ambiguity about the effects of amnesty. Everywhere they have been introduced [including in Europe](#) they have brought in their train a new flood of illegals.

This latest bill will do the same.

[Prof. Borjas agrees](#): "After all, what guarantees that the current batch of 12 million illegal immigrants will not be replaced by another 12 million in just a few years?" He makes the (apt!) Iraq analogy:

The bill neatly summarizes the intellectual flimsiness of the Bush administration a flimsiness that has cost us dearly in so many other areas. Perhaps they can convince themselves otherwise; that legalizing the status of illegal immigrants is not an amnesty, that the laws of supply and demand can be repealed when it comes to immigration

...

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And that the millions of new citizens from Latin America will be Republicans. ...

P.P.P.s: Lowry says [Senate insiders predict 70+ votes](#) for the compromise. But isn't that the safe vote for some Senate Dems--i.e. those from big industrial states, or reddish half-Southern states--"**no**"? They can say they voted against the compromise for La Raza-like reasons: [the shift away from "family reunification," the restrictions on "temporary" guest workers](#). But a "**no**" vote also makes it harder for non-La Raza conservatives (and liberal Dobbs populists) to attack them for having supported the bill's **amnesty** provisions. Win-win Kabuki! ... Also, if the Senate bill, with its immediate-legalization, passes, that will dramatically raise expectations and increase the pressure from Latino groups--increasing the bind of Dem legislators from iffy districts who worry about an anti-**amnesty** attack. One way to avoid the bind is to avoid raising expectations by letting the bill die now. ... This is all probably wishful thinking on my part. ...

Update: [Romney](#) and [Fred Thompson](#) have come out against the deal. Giuliani [fudges](#). ... 2:59 P.M.
[link](#)

Wednesday, May 16, 2007

Updates on the Senate GOP Cave-in on immigration, specifically the **amnesty** issue, at [The Corner](#), [Powerline](#) and [Hugh Hewitt](#). ...

Hewitt's gotten a leak of the bogus [tough sounding talking points](#) GOP Senators will try to deploy to cover their retreat. Many of the alleged concessions--like ending "chain migration" of family members--seem unenforceable in the long run. Are we really going to give citizenship to **illegals** but prevent them from reuniting with their families? I don't think so. Even if we could, and even if that were desirable, and even if the provisions survived in the Democratic house, it would hardly be worth what the GOP senators have apparently agreed to: taking the risk of encouraging another 12 million **illegals** to evade our still-porous border controls and wait for the next **amnesty**. ... This is looking more and more like the Bush administration's domestic version of Iraq: a big risky gamble, based on wishful thinking and nonexistent administrative competence, that will end in disaster. What disaster? 1) Lower wages for struggling unskilled--and semi-skilled--American workers (including, especially, underclass men) even when the labor market should be tight; 2) Income inequality moving further in the direction of Latin America--maybe even to such an extent that social equality between the rich and their servers becomes difficult to maintain; and 3) A large semi-assimilated population along our southern border with complex, understandably binational allegiances--our own Quebec. ... Actually, I can see why some Republicans might not be so bothered by (1) and (2). But what about Democrats? ...

Praxis: Here's [a form that lets you contact Sen. Kyl's office](#) to tell him whatever you think. In my experience, Congresspersons and Senators are extremely--make that absurdly, almost irrationally--sensitive to calls, emails and letters. ... 4:31 P.M. [link](#)

He means to win Wimbledon! Business analysts don't [seem to understand the economic logic](#) behind the huge price paid by [zippy Bill Clinton bachelor buddy Ron Burkle](#) for 76 specialty magazines. But is it possible there is **no** business logic? That Burkle doesn't really want to [own lots of magazines](#) so he can make lots of money? That he wants to own them for some other reason? [As a public trust?--ed There you go! Especially the tabs. He [wants to buy the tabs](#) because the tabs are a public trust.] ... Update: WWD is [thinking along the same lines](#)--that Burkle's 76-mag Primedia purchase is designed to set up the AMI tabloid purchase. ... Now all Hillary's got to do cement her pre-2008 newsstand stranglehold is somehow convince her ally Rupert Murdoch to buy the conservative Wall Street Journal! (**No** more "Who Is Vince Foster?" reprints!) What am I smoking? That could never happen! ... 1:07 A.M. [link](#)

Tuesday, May 15, 2007

Is Sen. Kyl Blowing It? [Judging from Robert Pear's report](#)** the Senate talks on an immigration "compromise" are heading in a grim direction. It's hard to tell exactly without either a) debriefing the principals or b) reading the statutory language. But Pear suggests these danger signs:

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1) Phony triggers? The complete amnesty will be delayed until ... what? Until the borders are actually controlled, or until the government merely makes a specified attempt to bring the borders under control? Here's s Pear:

Major provisions of the bill being developed in the Senate would not take effect unless the president first certified that he had hired more Border Patrol agents and taken other steps to beef up enforcement of immigration laws at the border and in the workplace. [E.A.]

That sure sounds like it's input, not output, that "triggers" the amnesty provisions.

2) Immediate legalization? As Mark Krikorian predicted, even before the "triggers" are triggered, it seems illegal immigrants would get "special 'Z visas,' allowing them to stay here for an initial period of four years." Really eight years, according to WaPo. In other words, immediate legalization. No wonder amnesty advocate Tamar Jacoby confidently asserts, "The fight over legalization, or 'amnesty,' is all but over." ... Other clues that the legalization provision is very liberal: The National Immigration Forum spokesperson praises it "very good, much better than the one in the bill passed by the Senate last year." And, according to WaPo, "the National Council of La Raza, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and the National Immigration Forum are virtually being granted veto power over" the bill by Sen. Ted Kennedy. [E.A.]

3) Misguided focus on guest workers? Instead of working to block a massive legalization of illegals--likely to only encourage the next generation of illegals to test our border controls--the "conservative" point man, Sen. John Kyl, appears to have focused on punishing over foreign citizens who come here legally under a new guest worker program.

"Temporary must mean temporary," said Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona, the principal Republican negotiator. "A temporary worker program should be for temporary workers, not for aliens who wish to become United States citizens."

Why shouldn't aliens who come here legally as guest workers have a path to citizenship? Isn't that an incentive we want to offer those who bother to go the legal route? Do we want a two-tier work force? La Raza's Cecilia Munoz has a point when she says "Senator Kyl's approach is contrary to our history as a nation of immigrants."

In politics, it's always harder to screw people who are already in place, marching, lobbying, and complaining --i.e. existing illegals--than it is to screw people who haven't yet come here and don't even know who they are (potential future guest workers). But in this case it's the people-in-place who've broken the law. They're the ones who need to be stiff-armed. Instead, Kyl seems to be acceding to an unjustified amnesty for illegals-in-place while letting conservatives get bought off by equally unjustified restrictions on future guest workers. Easy politics, terrible policy.

Is Kyl even trying to get a better bill? Or is he trying to get a better fig leaf to help sell conservatives Bush's bill? ...

**--It's risky to rely on Pear! He's honest, but he's almost always a captive of his liberal interest group sources. In today's article, for example, he quotes only the objections of pro-legalization figures (from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, La Raza, and the National Immigration Forum, a "pro immigrant advocacy group"). No "enforcement first" advocates make it into the piece. I don't think it's that Pear doesn't want their views--it's that the liberal interest groups are the people he is talking to all the time. They inevitably influence what he writes about, and what he writes about what he writes about. He's constantly soaking in a liberal interest group bath! Of course, when quote time comes around, they're the people he has handy. But even if he called up enforcement-firster Mark Krikorian and got a balancing quote, that wouldn't compensate for the way Krikorian's opponents have already shaped Pear's coverage. (Yes, I'm extrapolating here from Pear's role in the 1995-6 welfare debates.) 11:41 P.M. [link](#)

GOP Debate--kf Lazy Horse Race [Blink](#) Take**:

Win: Giuliani, McCain, Huckabee. ... Romney didn't come on strong--"double Guantanamo!"--until too late, therefore he loses relative momentum;

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Lose: Paul, Tancredo, Gilmore

Not Much Impact: Hunter, Thompson, Brownback

**--In other words, a "winner" isn't someone whom I liked, but who I thought gained support among Republican primary voters who actually watched the thing. ... 7:37 P.M.

Watch it, wingers! If [conservatives keep rubbing the Dem Congress' low poll ratings](#) [in its face](#), Nancy Pelosi might be tempted to counter the "do nothing" image by ... passing "comprehensive immigration reform," which most conservatives disdain. ...

Of course, some Republicans also desperately want an immigration bill to "get the issue off the table" before the elections. ([Hugh Hewitt](#), this means you.) Fortunately, National Review has not joined them--and instead produced a [calm and sensible editorial](#). They're not the ones running around [calling people "yahoos"!](#) Key NR graf:

Another false premise is that the various components of "comprehensive immigration reform" must go together. The president expressed this view most recently in last weekend's [radio address](#): "We must address all elements of this problem together, or none of them will be solved at all." Why? There is **no** reason not to pass enhanced enforcement measures now and turn to the status of remaining illegal aliens later. [E.A.]

The supposed linkage between increased enforcement and semi-**amnesty** is not dissimilar to the linkage between deposing Saddam Hussein and fighting Al Qaeda: weak, yet constantly repeated by the Bush Administration as a rhetorical device to sell a preconceived (and misguided) grand plan! It's their M.O.. The difference is that now conservatives are on to them too. ...

P.S.: There's an obvious contradiction lurking here. Powerline [agrees that passing immigration reform would help Democrats](#) by countering the 'do-nothing' charge. But the Republicans who are desperate to get the issue 'off the table' seem to feel a bill would help Republicans (largely, I'm told, by ending a divisive intraparty debate in which GOP hardliners inevitably alienate moderate swing voters with their harsh anti-immigrant rhetoric). They can't both be right. Control of Congress and of the White House is a zero sum game. Either a bill helps the GOPs or the Dems. Which is it? That's why I'm nervous, despite [Mark Krikorian's assurances](#). What if Pelosi concludes it's in her interest--even her short term, win-in-2008 interest--to move a bill even without 70 or 50 Republican votes as cover? ... P.P.S.: It's more obviously in Pelosi's long term interest to pass a semi-**amnesty** bill, since millions of new Hispanic voters are likely to be mainly Democrats even if the GOPs slightly increase their share. ... 3:28 P.M.

[Instapundit](#) and [Bob Krumm](#) argue we've seen a breathtaking demonstration of Fred Thompson's campaign potential in [this instantly produced and reasonably effective \(in the good cheap shot sense\) anti-Michael Moore video](#). ... Krumm is right that it's the sort of thing Hillary's ponderous campaign would have trouble matching. I think a clip like this only has a big tactical impact, though, if it gets picked up by the TV networks and starts driving the whole MSM--proliferation on the Web isn't enough, yet. But it's hard to see how the nets will be able to resist free video from a cigar-chomping Thompson. ... More important, I think: quite apart from its advantages as a campaign tool, the video is itself evidence of Thompson's actual presidential qualifications. You can't make a quickie spot like this unless a) you know what you think (or have a really fast pollster) b) you can react to new situations quickly, and c) you have some sense of theater. Those are all extremely important things for a president to have. (On the significance of (c), see Jon Alter's [FDR bio](#), which stresses Roosevelt's theatrical skill.) ... Also new: The use of Breitbart.tv, potentially a Drudge of video. ... 2:54 P.M.

[Vigorous Sucky writing](#) with Gillespie and Cavanaugh. (They know they're being vigorous. It's like watching the creaking John Wayne and Jimmy Stewart pretend they are young cowboys in The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance. Still **good!**) ... 2:08 P.M.

Today is supposed to be crunch day for the Senate compromise immigration bill being negotiated. [Mark Krikorian has an update](#): "[I]f Jon Kyl makes a deal with Ted Kennedy, then **amnesty** will pass the Senate; if not, not." ... Meanwhile, "comprehensive" supporter Tamar Jacoby [celebrates the spirit of bipartisan compromise](#) by

Endangered Pander

calling 25% of the [Republican] party "these yahoos." ...How come she gets to hurl the epithets? [At least she didn't call them "wusses."--ed. Then we'd have to wait for a ruling from Sullivan.] ..

Note to Associated Press: 'Amnesty' is no longer the word the bill's opponents use to "derisively brand" provisions to give illegal immigrants legal status. It's the Official NYT-Approved Honest Word for even conditional ("earned") legalization provisions. ... 1:12 P.M. [link](#)

Obama dares to support public charter schools before an AFL-CIO crowd! ("I think it's brave of a candidate to come here and say some of those things," says a Communications Worker of America union steward.) ... Do they unions realize how bad they look if a candidate has to be "brave" to tell them something 75% of Americans probably agree with? ... 12:36 P.M.

More sound pre-debate advice for the GOP candidates--especially for Mitt Romney--from Frum. ... 3:38 A.M.

Chrysler: Three unsubtle points--

1) Automobile's Jamie Kitman suggests that the American executives who sold Chrysler to Mercedes--Bob Eaton and Robert Lutz--were somehow motivated by their stock options to make a bad merger in 1998. But the merger was great for shareholders in the old Chrysler, no? They unloaded what was now obviously a turkey of a company on Mercedes for \$36 billion! It's the Germans who got taken. Wasn't that a triumph of ... er, salesmanship for Eaton and Lutz?

2) But Kitman rightly points to Mercedes' abject failure to get Chrysler to produce good new cars. The big rear-drive Chrysler 300 sedan was a huge hit, but instead of producing more, similar hits--and maybe distinguishing itself as the rear-drive, performance-oriented member of the Big Three, using all that Mercedes know-how--DaimlerChrysler churned out "a procession of also- and never-rans"--near-pathetic kludges dressed up in Victorian creases and squared-off plastic bulges: the Jeep Compass, the Dodge Caliber, the Chrysler Aspen. (Caveat: I actually think the much-derided Hummeresque Commander was good-looking.) The Caliber I rented last year was one of the clumsiest cars I've ever driven. Most of these vehicles use "design language" derived from the seminal Crossfire show car. DaimlerChrysler never seemed to realize that the seminal Crossfire show car was a dud! This is one Detroit automaker whose failure can't be blamed entirely on Wagner Act unionism with its legalistic work rules.

3) Wolfgang Bernhard, who looks like he will probably wind up running the company, is the Jennifer Granholm of the auto industry. ... 2:48 A.M. [link](#)

Monday, May 14, 2007

Dispute Resolution: It's left vs. right on Barack Obama's alleged "45 m.p.g." mistake. ... Winner: It looks like the left is right. Obama was pretty clearly referring to m.p.g. averages in Japan, not average m.p.g. of Japanese cars sold in the U.S.. ... Emotion: Relief that Obama's not as not ready for prime time as initial accounts had it. ... [via RCP's handy new blogfight page] 4:19 P.M.

Hagel Incoherence Watch: From Face the Nation ...

I am not happy with the Republican Party today," Hagel said. "It's been hijacked by a group of single-minded almost isolationists, insulationists, power-projectors."

Isolationists? Bush? Iraq? If the isolationists had hijacked the Republican Party we wouldn't be in this mess. ... Is Hagel just instinctively, mindlessly hitting the Sunday-morning MSM's erogenous zones (i.e., it's not respectable to be an "isolationist"). That's what he seems to do for a living. ... Update: Rich Lowry and his readers try to make sense of Hagel. It may be beyond the massively networked power of the Web. ... 12:11 P.M.

Endangered Pander

[Matt Yglesias suspects](#) "the whippersnapper window is closing." After Ezra Klein they pull up the drawbridge. Yikes. ... Can't they wait until the new generation of post-Bush, anti-Kos neolibroofs rebels comes online? These people are, like, only 12 at the moment. ... 11:43 A.M.

The End of Affirmative Action--First [Alterman](#), Now Obama? Even Barack Obama, under pressure from George Stephanopoulos, seemed to be abandoning the affirmative action idea and shifting toward embracing a class-based preference system, [notes Roger Clegg](#). ... This is more than a potential 'Sister Souljah moment' for Obama. Obama would not be showing that he can reject the more extreme, wacky positions of his party's component interest groups. He'd be showing he's rejecting what has been a central and widely accepted demand of an interest group with which he is inevitably identified. He's not quite there yet--and maybe he'll have to backtrack after his [ABC This Week comments](#)--but he's at least on the verge of giving voters not merely a reason to not oppose him, but a big reason to support him--the prospect that President Obama will end race preferences and the long, divisive debate they generate. Hillary cannot make that promise. Her husband famously balked at making exactly the shift--from race to class--that Obama seemed to endorse. And even if Hillary made that leap, she couldn't shift African-American opinion away from race preferences the way a black president could shift African-American opinion. She can't put the issue to rest. Obama can. ... P.S.: I blame [Jennifer Gratz](#). Michigan's [stunning 2006 anti-preference vote](#) is still resonating. Pols paid attention even if the press didn't. ...

Update: [Jonathan Chait](#) suggests Obama's shift towards class-based preferences is itself a class-based appeal. ... See also [Yglesias](#). 10:32 A.M. [link](#)

"Any Weapon to Hand": Some readers have asked for a definition of that phrase when I've applied it to my [excitable former boss](#). It means using any rhetorical trick, including trumped up outrage, to bash your opponent even if you are going to take a contradictory position when it helps bash whoever is your opponent a couple of months later. Example!

March 9, 2007: Andrew Sullivan [condemns my use](#) of the word "wussy," featuring a quote from a reader who argues

"The misogyny behind it - as behind so much homophobia - is pretty clear."

May 9, 2007: Sullivan [questions](#) why gun owners might not want their names published.

"Glenn Reynolds [argues](#) that the important thing is keeping people guessing about who has a gun or not. Fair enough. But I'm not that impressed by wusses who don't want to be ostracized by liberal elites at their neighborhood barbecues." [E.A.]

(Thanks to alert reader R.W., who argues the two month lag "before assuming the opposite position" actually represents a slowing of Sullivan's cycle of righteous self-contradiction.)

Update--The Whole Wuss and Nothing But the Wuss: [Sullivan responds](#) by charging I have a "long record of homophobia" because I wrote a piece 24 years ago defending a famous/infamous homophobic sign at an L.A. bar called Barney's Beanery--a piece that a) wasn't really homophobic, and b) I almost immediately rethought and regretted, and that [Sullivan surely knows I publicly repudiated years ago, the issue having surfaced in a recent blog back-and-forth](#). Like I said, "any weapon to hand." Also, intellectual dishonesty!** ... [Update: [Tim Cavanaugh thinks](#) this is "unironic umbrage." It was. But I added an exclamation point!]

P.S.: Did I mention that Sullivan [promoted Charles Murray's sensationalistic blacks-are-dumb book](#) and [caused the deaths of tens of thousands of innocents](#) in Iraq! ...

P.P.S.: The whole point of the email Sullivan reprinted is that the word "wussy" itself is misogynistic and homophobic, not that it's OK if it's used as an epithet in the "context" of attacking someone Sullivan deems worthy of attacking (in this case, gun owners). ...

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--Sullivan just made up the part about how "Mickey loved that bar." I didn't. I liked the Raincheck Room down the street. He also again quotes me using "wussy" without mentioning I was trying to characterize the p.o.v. of Ann Coulter and her conservative audience, not my own p.o.v.. (Here's [the dingalink](#)--you decide.) I don't think Edwards is "wussy on foreign policy." ... He is a bit elfin (in appearance). So sue me. 1:44 A.M.

Sunday, May 13, 2007

Mr. Loaf: In case you had any doubt where Gov. Bill Richardson [stands](#) on immigration reform, [here he is last year, overheard talking to an aide about the "Hagel-Martinez" immigration plan](#)--the [basis for the "comprehensive" reform bill that passed the Senate](#). It basically would have [offered legalization to illegal immigrants who'd been here for two years](#) or more--but this compromise was too restrictive for Richardson:

Rewind 10 hours. It's 8:15 a.m. and Richardson is running late.

As a state patrolman pushes the governor's Ford hybrid sport utility vehicle toward 90 mph, coaxing it to an unnatural whine, Richardson punches buttons on one of his three cellphones.

He calls an aide and discusses potential fundraising events in April and May with Bill Clinton and Al Gore. Then he dials [U.S.](#) Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., leaving a message on the Senate minority leader's cellphone about an immigration-reform bill being debated that day: "I don't like this Hagel-Martinez initiative. It's sort of half a loaf. Let's hold fast." [E.A.]

If you want the whole loaf, it looks like Richardson is your guy. ... 7:07 P.M.

Saturday, May 12, 2007

Econopundit [posits the intriguing exception](#) to the ["Fifty-Fifty Forever"](#) Theory:

Modern elections are largely governed by the principle of minimum differentiation which (according to the mean voter theorem) will generally produce a 50-50 split in most polls and elections. However: every so often an individual candidate will abandon minimum differentiation strategies only to uncover major constituencies "hidden" by 50-50 polling. This generates a poorly-predicted landslide in one direction or the other. (This differs from "wedge issue" thinking in one important respect. A "wedge" creates only the smallest of openings, not a landslide, and I hope you'll pardon this very mixed metaphor.) [E.A.]

2008? Iraq? Health care? ... Actually, you could argue that there are almost always hidden constituencies ready to be uncovered--with new ones constantly forming like magma. That would be one reason why the national election industry is less stable than, say, the soft drink industry--and why presidential races won't always be grinding near-ties like the past two. What does seem unlikely is that any lopsided victory margin will persist for more than a cycle or two (e.g., Karl Rove's permanent Republican majority fantasy, the Judis-Teixeira [emerging Dem majority fantasy](#)). The losing party will adjust and get back in the game--faster than ever before, thanks in part to, yes, the [Feiler Faster Thesis](#). ...

--Note that most, maybe all, of these issues could conceivably produce a landslide either way. For example, you'd think a Democrat could steal the hidden pro-universal constituency in the GOP. But if a Republican with a plausible health care plan--say, Romney--somehow managed to get the GOP nomination, he might steal the "constituency" of Democrats who want to go left only on health care. ... 12:20 P.M.

J. Goldberg, so naive: Does [this headline](#) seem like an accidental blooper to you? ... 1:39 A.M.

Friday, May 11, 2007

MickeyAssignment Desk: Fogeyism! Specifically, "Fogeyism" defined as the reaction of older reporters and pundits --print and online--against young bloggy commentators who have been empowered by new technology (and the politics it spawned), which gives them a voice and a following they would have enjoyed at their age in no other era.

Endangered Pander

... I have three examples, so it is a trend: 1) After New Republic's s Spencer Ackerman "in a blog post ... referred to someone as a 'fool,' [TNR ex-owner Marty Peretz wondering](#) "Where does a 15-year-old come off saying stuff like that?" Ackerman was soon to be a TNR ex-writer; 2) Newsweek's s Jon Alter [bristling at the treatment saying what I thought \(at the time\) about the youthful Ezra Klein](#)." 3) Me ill-advisedly [saying what I thought \(at the time\) about the youthful Ezra Klein](#). ...

Just because Fogeyish outbursts almost always look bad, damaging the Fogey more than the scorned young'un, doesn't mean they don't actually have some substantive basis. ... It did used to be that young journos went through a long apprenticeship before they reached a position from which they could address the masses on the great issues of the day. Now they have blogs in elementary school! That must have some consequences. Those consequences aren't all necessarily **good!** ... Were we **better** off in the 1960s, when the antiwar movement had to have leaders instead of bloggers? ... Where does Spencer Ackerman get off calling someone a "fool" anyway? ... Discuss! ... Assigned to: Someone of an age in between Fogey and Whippersnapper--say, Frank Foer! Or a Whippersnapper who's s kind of Fogeyish (say, Matthew Yglesias). ... 12:46 P.M. [link](#)

I didn't think Thomas Edsall would [without any irony declare that "David Broder is the voice of the people,"](#) as described in Radar. Comes now [Jonathan Alter to say that it didn't happen](#) and that Radar's s Jebediah Reed is a "bad reporter." ... Moral: Don't slime the Kool Kidz! We will f--k you up! And I say that in a pleasantly arch tone. ...

Update: Radar management emails a link to [Reed's response](#), under the subject line "Advantage: Whippersnappers." Reed stoutly maintains Edsall's s Broder comment "was not said archly." Not so fast, punks! Mark Kleiman, a Fogey of the Left who knows Edsall and Edsall's s sense of humor, is [almost certainly right when he blogs](#):

I've known Edsall for close to 40 years. (I was still in high school when he covered a campaign I worked on: Parren Mitchell's s first run for Congress.) He has the best dead-pan I've ever encountered. It's s a normal conversational gambit (for him) to say something transparently absurd with a completely flat affect.

I bet Reed just missed Edsall's s deadpan. Kleiman's s interpretation jibes with dry-joke emails I've gotten from Edsall. Including some recent ones! ... P.S.: But wait. Reed claims to have a recording of the incident. "[I]f you doubt my account, you're welcome to pop by Radar HQ and listen to the exchange on tape." Why make anyone pop by? Reed could podcast it, and let the world judge. He could also contact Edsall on the record. Then, I suspect, he will discover he got his interpretation wrong in exactly the way a Whippersnapper who has **no** history with his subjects might easily get the interpretation wrong. Then he'll stop digging and go find a state where he's s old enough to drink off the whole incident! (Hahaha. Is little joke I make. Arch, yes!) ... 12:29 P.M. [link](#)

It's s not the famed ["personal conduct" problem](#)--Holy Grail of Bill Richardson watchers--but it turns out that Gov. Richardson, **no** less than New Jersey Gov. John Corzine, has a significant speed addiction, [according to Radley Balko](#):

In 2003, The Washington Post reported that New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson routinely ordered his driver to whip down public roads at speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour. Even after those reports, when a police officer attempted to pull over Richardson's s car for speeding in 2005, the governor's s driver refused to stop. ...[snip]

For his part, [Richardson refused to apologize for his law-breaking](#). He said he'd instruct his drivers to slow down, but cited his busy schedule as governor and said he wouldn't promise not to speed again. [By April 2006, his car was seen pushing 90 again](#).. ...

Isn't this a pretty basic violation of social equality? You'd think liberal egalitarians would be as offended as anyone at the sense "among many elected officials that their job is so important, their time so much more precious than ours and their position in public life so privileged, that they can zip by us on the road, pushing everyday folk aside so they can get to their far more important destinations." ...

Endangered Pander

P.S.: "Zip"--there's s [that word again](#)! [Also 'whip'-ed Wow.] ...

P.P.S.: Most of Balko's s piece is devoted to excoriating injured N.J. Gov. Corzine for his recent nauseatingly solipsistic performance, in which (as Balko notes) he was "contrite for putting his own life at risk, but not for jeopardizing the lives of everyone else on the road" while speeding to a photo-op at more than 90 m.p.h. ... [via [Instapundit](#)] 2:08 A.M.

Thursday, May 10, 2007

Not Only Will the Revolution Not Be Televised--It Won't Even Make the Front Page:

"The more you fail, the more money they throw at you," he said. "We're filthy rich; I don't want any more of your money. Send me quality teachers."

[That's Frank Wells, principal of Locke High](#), a key "troubled" high school [near Watts](#) in South Central L.A.. Or maybe I should say former principal. There have been wild and significant doings at Locke. A [majority of the school's teachers have signed petitions supporting the school's conversion of into a group of smaller charter schools](#) (under the aegis of charter entrepreneur Steve Barr's Green Dot organization). The central school district bureaucracy apparently then struck back at Wells, who was "escorted off campus and relieved of his duties late Tuesday afternoon pending the outcome of a district investigation into allegations that Wells allowed teachers to leave their classrooms to collect and sign petitions." [E.A.] ... The teachers' union, [Eduwonk reports](#), has not surprisingly reacted angrily to the subversive challenge from its own members--asking for time to present it's own "reform" ideas.** ...

I don't know exactly what to make of this story (though I'm obviously rooting for Barr). If the problem with Locke is lack of "quality teachers," then who are the teachers who are signing the petition to become part of a charter school? Are they the good Locke teachers or the bad Locke teachers?

As usual, it's especially hard to discern exactly what's going on reading the LAT's account because the paper's tediously dull, formal, "neutral" style gets in the way of actually comprehending the forces at work. Here's the Times:

Underscoring the anxiety and anger the plan is unleashing within the district, Locke Principal Frank Wells was escorted off campus and relieved of his duties late Tuesday afternoon ... [snip]

Wells called the charges "a total fabrication," saying no classes were disrupted as teachers signed and collected signatures during non-class time. Teachers who helped collect signatures supported Wells' version of events. [E.A.]

I think the vague boldfaced words are journalistic code for something like this:

Terrified by the threat that if a big ghetto high school like Locke secedes the entire union-supported city schools bureaucracy might collapse like the East German government at the end of Lives of Others--and angered that Wells would even [talk to the Green Dot charter people \(in front of U.S. Education Secretary Spellings, no less\)](#)--the school district's bureaucratic blob immediately and crudely retaliated against him by trumping up charges ...

But I'm not sure! ... At least the Times is on the case--though its account didn't make the front page.*** And the paper is decidedly not taking the union side. ... [L.A. Observed](#), which I usually rely on tell me the real story, is uncharacteristically asleep at the switch. ...

Update: Here's [Warren Olney's Which Way L.A.?](#) on the Locke developments. ... The L.A.T.'s reporter was subsequently blocked from entering the Locke campus, and the [paper's education blog isn't happy about it](#). Good to see passion of any sort at the Times, even if it's in defense of special press rights--sorry, I mean "the public's right to know." [via [L.A. Observed](#)] ... Now that the Times blog is riled up, we learn that Wells' firing was a "ham-handed dumping," that the school district's press office is badly overstuffed, and that it's no

Endangered Pander

wonder ... that many of Locke's teachers have essentially issued a vote of no confidence in the status quo, saying that they'd rather be working for Steve Barr's Green Dot Charter Schools ...

It's also no wonder readers might prefer to get their info from opinionated blogs than from the LAT print edition. You learn more on the blog! ... P.S.--Inevitable analogy: Who will be the Steve Barr/Green Dot for the Times' own stultifying, school-district-like print bureaucracy?

**--See Eduwonk for [added "card check" irony!](#) ...

***--[W]ho do you have to decapitate to make Page 1 around here?"--[Michael Kinsley](#). 12:56 P.M. [link](#)

Here's a [bit of writing that doesn't stand the test of time](#). ... 12:11 A.M.

David Frum [says something to his fellow Republicans](#) that, once it's said, obviously needed saying:

I wish somebody at the Reagan Library had said: "Ronald Reagan was a great leader and a great president because he addressed the problems of his time. But we have very different problems and we need very different answers. Here are mine."

But if one of the candidates had said that, would we have hearkened? Or would we say: The path to the nomination will be crossed by the candidate who does the best job of ticking the boxes of a coalition that probably now spans no more than 30 percent of the electorate?

Barring some calamitous mistake by the Democrats (and true, that can never be ruled out from the "war is lost" party), the GOP enters the 2008 election cycle at a serious disadvantage. If we want to win, we have to offer the American voter something fresh and compelling. I think most of us understand that. And yet at the same time we are demanding that our candidates repeat formulas and phrases from two and three decades ago.

Attention, [Robert "Red Meat" Novak](#). ... 12:08 A.M.

[Bloggingheads](#) --Bob Wright's videoblog project. [Gearbox](#) --Searching for the Semi-Orgasmic Lock-in.
[Drudge Report](#) --80 % true. Close enough! [Instapundit](#) --All-powerful hit king. [Joshua Marshall](#) -
 -He reports! And decides! [Wonkette](#) --Makes Jack Shafer feel guilty. [Salon](#) -- Survives! kf
 gloating on hold. [Andrew Sullivan](#) --He asks, he tells. He sells! [David Corn](#) --Trustworthy reporting
 from the left. [Washington Monthly](#) --Includes Charlie Peters' proto-blog. [Lucianne.com](#) --Stirs the
 drink. [Virginia Postrel](#) -- Friend of the future! [Peggy Noonan](#) -- Gold in every column. [Matt
 Miller](#) --Savvy rad-centrism. [WaPo](#) --Waking from post-Bradlee snooze. [Keller's Calmer Times](#) --
 Registration required. [NY Observer](#) --Read it before the **good** writers are all hired away. [New
 Republic](#) --Left on welfare, right on warfare! [Jim Pinkerton](#) -- Quality ideas come from quantity ideas.
[Tom Tomorrow](#) --Everyone's favorite leftish cartoonists' blog. [Ann "Too Far" Coulter](#) --Sometimes it's just
 far enough. [Bull Moose](#) -- National Greatness Central. [John Ellis](#) --Forget that
 Florida business! The cuz knows politics, and he has, ah, sources. ["The Note"](#) --How the pros start their
 day. [Romenesko](#) -- O.K. they actually start it here. [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#) --Money
 Liberal Central. [Steve Chapman](#) --Ornery-but-lovable libertarian. [Rich Galen](#) --Sophisticated GOP
 insider. [Man Without Qualities](#) --Seems to know a lot about white collar crime. Hmmm.
[Overlawyered.com](#) --Daily horror stories. [Eugene Volokh](#) --Smart, packin' prof, and not Instapundit!
[Eve Tushnet](#) --Queer, Catholic, conservative and not Andrew Sullivan! [WSJ's Best of the Web](#) --James
 Taranto's excellent obsessions. [Walter Shapiro](#) --Politics and (don't laugh) neoliberal humor! [Eric
 Alterman](#) --Born to blog. [Joe Conason](#) --Bush-bashing, free most days. [Lloyd Grove](#) --Don't let him
 write about you. [Arianna's Huffosphere](#) --Now a whole fleet of hybrid vehicles. [TomPaine.com](#) --
 Web-lib populists. [Take on the News](#) --TomPaine's blog. [B-Log](#) --Blog of spirituality! [Hit &
 Run](#) --Reason gone wild! [Daniel Weintraub](#) --Beeblogger and Davis Recall Central. [Eduwonk](#) --
 You'll never have to read another mind-numbing education story again. [Nonzero](#) -- Bob Wright explains it

Endangered Pander

all. [John Leo](#) --If you've got political correctness, he's got a column. [Gawker](#) --It's come to this. [Eat the Press](#)--Sklarianna & Co. are like Gawker if Gawker actually believed in something. ... [More tk]

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Web Publication

Subject: US REPUBLICAN PARTY (90%); POLITICAL PARTIES (90%); VOTERS & VOTING (90%); IMMIGRATION (89%); ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS (89%); CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS (77%); PRIMARY ELECTIONS (72%); DISMISSALS (71%); PETITIONS (71%); RECRUITMENT & HIRING (65%); BLOGS & MESSAGE BOARDS (61%); RELIGION (50%)

Industry: BLOGS & MESSAGE BOARDS (61%)

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Geographic: ARIZONA, USA (79%); CALIFORNIA, USA (79%); IRAQ (79%); **UNITED STATES** (79%)

Load-Date: June 6, 2007