

THE 1994 CAMPAIGN: THE NANNY ISSUE:
Inquiry Starts On Candidate Who Hired Illegal Alien

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Body

The United States Immigration and Naturalization Service has begun a preliminary **inquiry** into whether Representative Michael Huffington violated Federal law when he employed an **illegal immigrant** at his home in Santa Barbara for five years.

A spokeswoman for the immigration service, Virginia Kice, said today in Los Angeles that the agency began looking into the matter after Mr. Huffington, a Republican seeking a United States Senate seat, conceded at a news conference on Thursday that a **nanny** who was in this country illegally worked at his home from 1989 until 1993.

"On the basis of that press conference, we have begun an investigation, which at this point is basically information gathering," Ms. Kice said.

Under Federal law, anyone who **hires** an **alien** must first determine whether the **alien** is a legal resident of the United States. A violation can bring a fine of \$250 to \$2,000.

Mr. Huffington, who has vigorously called for stronger measures to control **illegal** immigration, is in a neck-and-neck race with the incumbent, Senator Dianne Feinstein. Mr. Huffington is a staunch supporter of Proposition 187, a citizen initiative on California's Nov. 8 ballot to deny most government services, including schooling and nonemergency health care, to undocumented **aliens**. Ms. Feinstein is opposed.

This evening in a television interview, Mr. Huffington admitted that the **nanny** was flown to Washington during his freshman term in Congress. At that time, Mr. Huffington was the co-sponsor of a bill to outlaw the transportation of **illegal immigrants** across state lines for purposes of employment, television station KEYT in Santa Barbara said.

Jennifer Grossman, a spokeswoman for the Huffington **campaign**, said today that the **campaign** had not been notified of the investigation and that the action sounded like an effort by the Clinton Administration to help the Feinstein **campaign**. But Ms. Grossman said the focus of any **inquiry** should be Mr. Huffington's wife, Arianna, not the Congressman.

"Mrs. Huffington **hired** the **nanny**, and she was the one who always paid her," Ms. Grossman said. As she had several times earlier, Ms. Feinstein denied an assertion by Mr. Huffington that she once employed undocumented

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workers. Mr. Huffington has said several times that he had received reports that the workers were named Marta and Rita, but he has been unable to supply any further information.

"There's never been a Marta or a Rita in my life and there's no truth to it," Senator Feinstein said.

Ms. Kice, the I.N.S. spokeswoman, said Ms. Feinstein was not the subject of an investigation.

A poll published today by The Los Angeles Times showed the Feinstein-Huffington contest had tightened over the last two weeks, with the Senator's lead dropping to three points, from a previous edge of seven points. However, the poll was taken before it became known that an illegal immigrant had worked in the Huffington home.

The Times, the state's largest newspaper, also endorsed Ms. Feinstein today, saying she had done a good job for the state and did not deserve "displacement by a relative political unknown." The endorsement was the first made by the paper in 18 years.

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