

## **House: no school for illegal aliens**

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

March 21, 1996, Thursday, 0 South Pinellas Edition

Copyright 1996 Times Publishing Company

**Section:** NATIONAL; Pg. 1A

**Length:** 932 words

**Byline:** ELLEN DEBENPORT

**Dateline:** WASHINGTON

### **Body**

---

At the urging of House Speaker Newt Gingrich, the House on Wednesday slammed the schoolhouse door against children who are in this country illegally, voting that they have no right to public education.

"This is the right thing to do to send the right signal around the world," Gingrich said in a rare speech on the House floor. "Come to America for opportunity. Do not come to America to live off the American taxpayer." "NOSKUL

The vote wasn't close, 257-163.

Each state would be allowed to decide whether to continue to educate its children. Florida spends more than \$ 400-million a year for illegal immigrant children in its schools, with no help from the federal government.

But Gov. Lawton Chiles has said he opposes measures like the one the House passed. He says he would rather have the children in school than on the streets.

In a series of votes, the House took steps to nationalize California's Proposition 187, which was passed overwhelmingly in 1994 to deny nearly all benefits to illegal immigrants. It has been tied up in California courts every since.

The House said illegal immigrant parents should not be allowed to apply for welfare on behalf of their children who were born in this country and are U.S. citizens. Lawmakers said it's a back door way to collect welfare, which already is banned for illegal immigrants.

They voted to test a new workplace system to try to catch illegal immigrants if they apply for jobs. Employers could call an 800 number to see whether a job applicant is legally in the country. One congressman dubbed it 1-800-BIG-BROTHER.

But the lawmakers stopped short of requiring hospitals to turn over the names of illegal immigrants for deportation after they seek medical treatment.

All this is a long way from becoming law. The House is working its way through an enormous immigration reform bill, with a final vote expected today.

The Senate, which is working on its own bill, would have to agree to these measures, then the president would have to sign them into law. President Clinton has said he wants to keep the kids in school.

## House: no school for illegal aliens

But even if he changed his mind - and Clinton will need to win big immigration states including Florida, Texas and California to get re-elected - the school ban surely would head to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The court ruled in 1982 that states have an obligation to educate all children, regardless of their immigration status. But the ruling noted that Congress had never addressed the matter.

Gingrich said people are living in "fantasyland" if they don't think welfare and a free education are drawing immigrants to this country. Educating the children in California, New York, Florida and Texas alone costs about \$ 3-billion a year, he said.

If the federal government can't stop the flow of immigrants, then Congress should pay for their schooling, Gingrich said.

His words enraged Rep. John Bryant, D-Texas, a sponsor of the immigration bill. A number of members would have loved to see federal funds to educate illegal immigrant children, but the Republican-controlled Rules Committee wouldn't let them bring it to a vote.

"I say shame on you, Mr. Speaker," Bryant said.

The immigration bill, which Bryant is sponsoring with Texas Republican Lamar Smith, tries in a variety of ways to make America less attractive to illegal immigrants. Schools, welfare and jobs are thought to be what draws them, and the bill tries to curtail each one.

The House fought for hours about the workplace verification system but agreed to a three-year pilot project in five states, including Florida. Employers who volunteer for the project would call an 800-number to see whether a job applicant's name matches his Social Security number.

"We know what's coming next - national ID cards in all likelihood," said Rep. Steve Chabot, R-Ohio, who tried to kill the system.

Others complained the verification system would violate privacy and civil liberties or would burden businesses. One compared it to tracking down the Japanese to put them in internment camps.

Employers already have a verification system they don't like. They must ask to see a Social Security number and file a form swearing the employee is legal. But they have no way of knowing whether the number is valid, and fake documents are a booming business in immigration states.

Republican Ken Calvert said as a businessman in California, "I saw my share of suspicious documents over the years. 1-800 would give me peace of mind."

As for welfare, about 100,000 American children will be barred from welfare if their illegal immigrant parents cannot apply for it, said Rep. Nydia Velazquez, a New York Democrat who immigrated from Puerto Rico.

She argued that the bill would create two tiers of U.S. children, some entitled to aid and others not. The House was not moved.

"I do not believe we should reward those who break our laws and then provide them with generous welfare checks," said Rep. Elton Gallegly, R-Calif. The money should be used for bus fare to send them home, he said.

Florida votes

A "yes" vote is a vote to add the amendment to the bill. An X denotes those not voting.

House: no school for illegal aliens

Republicans - Bilirakis, Y; Canady, Y; Diaz-Balart, N; Foley, Y; Fowler, Y; Goss, Y; McCollum, Y; Mica, Y; Miller, Y; Ros-Lehtinen, N; Scarborough, Y; Shaw, Y; Stearns, Y; Weldon, Y; Young, Y. Democrats - Brown, N; Deutsch, Y; Gibbons, N; Hastings, N; Johnston, X; Meek, N; Peterson, X; Thurman, N.

## Classification

---

**Language:** ENGLISH

**Subject:** US STATE IMMIGRATION LAW (90%); **ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS** (90%); CHILDREN (90%); IMMIGRATION (89%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (89%); IMMIGRATION LAW (88%); US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES 2012 (78%); EDUCATION SYSTEMS & INSTITUTIONS (78%); RIGHT TO EDUCATION (78%); LITIGATION (78%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (74%); DECISIONS & RULINGS (72%); PUBLIC **SCHOOLS** (72%); DEPORTATION (69%); EMPLOYMENT SEARCH (69%); LAW COURTS & TRIBUNALS (66%); SUPREME COURTS (66%)

**Company:** TEXAS REPUBLICAN LAMAR SMITH (56%); TEXAS REPUBLICAN LAMAR SMITH (56%)

**Industry:** EDUCATION SYSTEMS & INSTITUTIONS (78%); PUBLIC **SCHOOLS** (72%)

**Person:** BILL CLINTON (79%); NEWT GINGRICH (78%)

**Geographic:** CALIFORNIA, USA (94%); FLORIDA, USA (93%); TEXAS, USA (92%); NEW YORK, USA (79%); UNITED STATES (94%)

**Load-Date:** March 21, 1996