

# **REID BASHES REPUBLICANS FOR A POSITION ON IMMIGRATION THAT HE ONCE PUSHED**

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**Byline:** LUKAS PLEVA

## **Body**

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On birthright citizenship for illegal immigrants.

Harry Reid on Monday, August 23rd, 2010 in his Senate re-election campaign effort.

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### THE RULING: FULL FLOP

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., has been critical of Republican efforts to revisit the question of birthright citizenship for children of illegal immigrants, but that seems to have backfired, with rivals saying he once supported the idea himself. The claim has popped up everywhere from the website of the Nevada Republican Party to the Washington Times to a twitter feed from Reid's GOP opponent, Sharon Angle, so we decided to look into it.

Has Reid switched his position on "clarifying" the 14th amendment?

To check, we looked back to August 4, 1993. That's when Reid introduced the Immigration Stabilization Act of 1993, a bill that would have, among other things, revoked birthright citizenship. Section 1001, entitled "Basis of Citizenship Clarified," said, in effect, that children born in United States to parents who are illegal immigrants would not become U.S. citizens.

And just in case there was any confusion about the matter, a press release that Reid's office issued a day later states that the bill "clarifies that a person born in the United States to an alien mother who is not a lawful resident is not a U.S. citizen." This clarification would have eliminated the "incentive for pregnant alien women to enter the United States illegally, often at risk to mother and child, for the purpose of acquiring citizenship for the child and accompanying federal financial benefits," said Reid.

Reid encouraged other lawmakers to consider and vote for the bill in a Senate floor speech on September 20, 1993. "While other legislation has been introduced in this session of Congress to address some of the most egregious abuses of our immigration laws, this legislation is the only one that institutes comprehensive reform to the entire process" Reid said. He reiterated his arguments for increased immigration controls in an August 10, 1994, op-ed piece published in the Los Angeles Times. Comparing the United States to a table that is "becoming overcrowded," Reid wrote that "unless changes are made, our dinner table eventually will collapse, and no one will have security and opportunity." The bill ultimately died in committee.

But as they say, past is the past. What is Reid's position today?

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**Reid** was asked about the issue in a press conference on August 3, 2010. He did not answer the question directly but quoted extensively from Michael Gerson, a Washington Post columnist. Gerson wrote a column on July 30, 2010, in which he said that Sen. Lindsey Graham -- a South Carolina **Republican** who is considering a constitutional amendment to change the birthright citizenship process -- has "either taken leave of his senses or of his principles."

So, in 1993, **Reid** was clearly for restricting birthright citizenship. He introduced a bill that would have "clarified" the 14th amendment to mean that children of illegal immigrants do not automatically become U.S. citizens at birth. Twenty years later, he seems to be agreeing with Gerson that **Republicans** have either lost their senses or abandoned their principles.

However, **Reid** has openly acknowledged his changed **position** on at least two occasions. In a House floor speech on August 5, 2006, he admitted that the "low point" of his legislative career came when he introduced the "travesty that [he] called legislation" in 1993. The Las Vegas Review-Journal also reported on December 13, 1999, that **Reid** said that the legislation is "way up high" on his "list of mistakes" and that it was "short-sighted." He added, "I didn't understand the issue. I'm embarrassed that I made such a proposal."

To sum up. Nobody -- not even **Reid** himself -- is denying that **Reid** switched his **position** on "clarifying" the 14th amendment. He wrote a bill in 1993 that would have denied birthright citizenship to children of illegal aliens. Six years later, he called that bill a mistake. Granted, he apparently regrets introducing the bill, but we wanted to know whether **Reid** has changed his **position**. We found that he did, so we rate this a Full Flop.

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About this statement:

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Researched by: Lukas Pleva

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## Graphic

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REID BASHES REPUBLICANS FOR A POSITION ON IMMIGRATION THAT HE ONCE PUSHED

PHOTO (2)

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