

## *The Case of the Diamond Dildo*

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### **Body**

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Army of Farinas: I wouldn't claim that the political ads made by unofficial lone amateur YouTube propagandists are better than the ads made by professionals.\*\* But unofficial designs for the rumored Ferrari Dino from lone, amateur auto stylists--one [Turkish](#), one [Portuguese](#)--are almost certainly better than any design Ferrari will actually produce, judging from its recent products. ... [via [Autoblog](#)]

\*\*--This doesn't mean they don't have an impact. See [this Pew survey](#). ... 1:53 A.M. [link](#)

L.A. Times--[Scooped again](#)? ... 10:15 P.M.

Army of Shrums Update: On reflection, homemade YouTube ads seem **more** potentially subversive than I [originally](#) thought. I [try to explain here](#). ... Not only do these amateur ads seem to evade the campaign finance laws, they seem to undermine the whole assumption of those laws, which is that candidates with **more** money enjoy a proportional advantage. No they won't--at least if they're typically undone by whichever catchy, 15-second spot cooked up by a teenager on blogspot gains the most viral exposure (by being re-shown on the TV news in addition to being viewed on the Web). The outcome of a true YouTube election will be **more** random--but, arguably, **more** substance-related. ... To Be Sure: I'm not saying we're already past the time when races get determined by what Bob Shrum and Roger Ailes, or their successors, spend donors' millions to tell voters. But that's the direction, no? ... 7:44 P.M.

I realized what's wrong with celebrated L.A. Times auto columnist Dan Neil when I came to the point in a [recent road test](#) where he describes the Scion tC--a depressing mash of mainstream design cliches, the [Maison de La Casa House](#) of cars--as "beautifully styled." [Decide for yourself](#). Or take it from me: he has schlocky taste. ... 3:31 P.M.

The Strange Case of the Diamond Dildo: It's just like porn-centric [lone L.A. blogger Luke Ford](#), writing about new arrival David Beckham, to recklessly report:

On another occasion, while Victoria was expecting their third child, Beckham spent \$1.8 million for a diamond-encrusted sex toy with matching 16-carat diamond necklace. [E.A.]

Too good to check--and bloggers don't have to check, do they? It turns out Mrs. Beckham [has now denied the tidbit](#):

"It isn't true," Victoria said, her voice calm and measured. "We do buy each other nice things," she admitted, but some things get exaggerated. "I don't have a diamond-encrusted vibrator."

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Indeed, a quick NEXIS search brings up a lot of stories citing a man who was selling \$1.8 million diamond-encrusted vibrators speculating that Beckham was thinking about buying one. Anyone with any professional journalistic experience would view with suspicion subsequent reports that might have Beckham actually purchasing the thing.

Maybe [pompous L.A. Times media critic Tim Rutten had a point](#) about those "gossip sheets, whether online or on slick paper, that continue to proliferate like informational vermin." The Pulitzer-winning Times would never . ... Hello? What? Really? The bogus Becks vibrator story didn't appear in Luke Ford's blog at all? It appeared ...well, [here](#). ... P.S.: And it hasn't been corrected. ... [via [Steve Smith](#)] 1:15 A.M.

Wednesday, July 11, 2007

[According to L.A. Observed](#), Mayor Villaraigosa appears to have drawn a line around Mirthala Salinas and put his credibility, if not his career, on it:

At today's photo op du jour, he flatly denied that there have been any other women in his recent past "a definitive, absolute no."

The mayor's language is echoed in [this local ABC TV report](#). The LAT, with its traditional flair for the telling detail, [truncates it to "no."](#) ... 6:13 P.M.

He **[Helped](#)** Build Pottersville: The only actor in our family--my grandmother's cousin, Charles Lane--passed away Monday at the age of 102. He was a great character who had a [fantastic career as a character actor](#), although the two characters did not always coincide. (Unlike some of his screen and stage personalities, he was a kind and non-unconsciously funny man.) I guess he couldn't live forever.--but he made it close! Here's a [nice LAT obituary](#). ... As [Kevin Roderick notes](#), Charlie lived through the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. ... 12:30 A.M.

Monday, July 9, 2007

Only the most respectable, noble-minded political analysts get to [call people who disagree with them 'cowards.'](#) ... 7:26 P.M.

You Connect the Dots! I [tried this before](#), and it [all came crashing down](#). But now there are two **[more](#)** dots!

Dot 1: [Jeff Gerth and Don Van Natta report](#) in their [recent book](#) that Hillary Clinton personally

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.

Dot 2: Tina Brown's new [Diana Chronicles](#) contains this passage, supporting reports that Princess Di was thinking of marrying U.S. tycoon Ted Forstmann as part of a possible presidential ticket:

Diana built an escape fantasy around Forstmann for a time. "It's a true story," he told me, "that Diana had the idea that we should get married, that I should run for president and she would be First Lady."

Dot 3: Forstmann [was in fact seriously mentioned](#) as a Republican opponent for Hillary in the 2000 N.Y. Senate race.

Dot 4: Both Diana (according to Tina Brown) and Forstmann [according to the New York Daily News](#)\*\*thought they were being bugged.

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Dot 5: A British [paper reported](#) that Diana and Forstmann and Diana were bugged by some American outfit during the Clinton administration, although the official Lord Stevens inquiry failed to include this allegation despite press predictions that it would. (See also [this account](#), which doesn't mention Forstmann but does claim Diana was bugged by Americans.)

Emphasis added.

\*\*--Dec 12, 2006 Daily News story not online, but it's on NEXIS. 7:03 P.M. [link](#)

Is that vaunted "virtual fence" on the border vulnerable to "denial of service" attacks? [Yes, it is at the moment](#). Influence Peddler comments. ... 2:19 P.M.

The lid is off: L.A.'s mayor faces some N.Y. tabloid-style questioning at a news conference. The L.A. Times reporter who didn't get the story [doesn't know quite what to make of this new state of affairs](#)--I detect a mild sneering tone! Luke Ford sees a ["beautiful synchronicity."](#) ... I think Angelenos may be actually getting interested in local politics for once, which will give us better government in the long run. Special interests (e.g., unions, developers) have less power when people are actually paying attention. [What will happen if all the pols in power are no longer womanizers, etc.?--ed Not a serious possibility.] ... 1:43 P.M.

Bob Wright [diavlogs with my brother Steve on bloggingheads.tv](#) (about Scooter Libby and Barry Bonds, among others) and at the end tries [to extract dirt from him on me](#). Ha! After one lucky question, Wright gets a schooling in the concept of omerta. ... 1:37 A.M.

Sunday, July 8, 2007

Wasn't Jacqueline Bouvier kind of a ["trophy wife"](#)? Just asking! ... [via [Powerline](#)] 11:28 P.M.

Web 1, Downie 0? I was hoping to be able to violate at least one of Slate-owner [WaPo's "Ten Principles for Washington Post Journalism on the Web"](#)--but it turns out that's not easy to do. Take Principle #7:

We recognize and support the central role of opinion, personality and reader-generated content on the Web. But reporters and editors should not express personal opinions unless they would be allowed in the newspaper, such as in criticism or columns.

What opinions would not "be allowed in ... criticism or columns"?\*\* This is a decisively permissive standard, no? A reporter could blog "Bush lied, people died" or "Hillary scares the daylight out of me." Len Downie could even tell Web readers [for whom he might vote](#) if he slipped up and actually thought about voting. ... P.S.: In fact, #7 doesn't sit very comfortably alongside [Downie's earlier monastic ban](#) on activities that might "seem" to compromise a reporter's ability to report fairly. If you denounce Obama, op-ed style, mightn't that "seem" to be compromising to many readers? ... [via [Romenesko](#)] 11:18 P.M.

The [New York Times is for withdrawal](#) of U.S. troops from most of Iraq, except maybe the Kurdish north. Even the [promising Anbar-type initiatives](#)--which seem to require an aggressive U.S. military presence--are apparently to be abandoned. The Times admits the result of the withdrawal will "most likely" be chaos, including "further ethnic cleansing, even genocide." But it still prefers withdrawal. [Jules Crittenden finds this morally curious](#), and so do I. ... I could be convinced that withdrawal is justified because the ensuing burst of sectarian killing will be short, followed by relative stability--preferable, in the long run, to continued occupation. I could be convinced we should abandon the goal of a unitary Iraqi state and focus on some sort of engineered partition. I hope I couldn't be convinced that we should abandon Iraqis to "genocide" just because the resulting deaths can be blamed on Bush. Does that mean they don't count? . ...

P.S.: Do you think there's really a threat that [Bush will be able to sell the idea that the U.S. military is to blame](#) for an Iraq disaster if it runs out of troops next spring? I don't. At this point Bush couldn't sell the nation on coming in

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out of the rain, let alone a wacky argument that he's not responsible for the military. ... [Ponnuru](#) has same reaction. ...

P.P.S.: [This](#) seems like the next card for Bush to play--a Sunni-initiated "no confidence" vote in the Iraqi parliament against al-Maliki. If it succeeds, "surge" skeptics wouldn't have Nuri to kick around any [more](#). Juan Cole [suggests the vote would be close](#). ... The obvious question Cole doesn't get to is whether whoever replaces Maliki would be willing to make the fabled 'political compromises' (on oil revenues, de-Baathification, etc.) and whether those compromises really can curb sectarian violence at this point. Note that al-Sadr would be part of the anti-Maliki coalition. ...

Backfill: Omar of Iraq the Model is relatively pro-surge--at least [he was on June 27](#), saying "the results so far have been astounding." He focuses mainly on the turn against al Qaeda, acknowledging that the "internal struggle for power will not end by pacifying al-Qaeda or the militias." Still ... 9:14 P.M. [link](#)

Saturday, July 7, 2007

Novak [buries the lede](#) on a formerly hapless GOP freshman Senator:

Sen. Elizabeth Dole of North Carolina, viewed as one of the most vulnerable incumbent Republican senators seeking re-election in 2008, has made a comeback with successful fund-raising and a boost in approval ratings.

Dole's private polls put her favorability level at 59 percent, compared with President Bush's 42 percent. Republican insiders attribute that mostly to her opposing the [immigration bill](#) backed by Bush. [E.A.]

Note: That's not a comeback just among Republican primary voters. It's a comeback among all voters. ... P.S.: Yes, Dole's obviously trying to scare away challengers by leaking those private polls to Novak. I bet Lindsey Graham wishes he could do that. ... 11:55 P.M. [link](#)

"Don't Get Caught Again": Lone blogger [Luke Ford](#), and not the L.A. Times, continues to be where you go to find out what's really happening in the [Villarsalinas sex scandal](#). Ford notes that the LAT, despite signs of catch-up tabloid feistiness earlier in the week, has delivered its [traditional scandal-killing thumbsucker](#) right on schedule. Riveting headline: "Villaraigosa affair may not be one to remember." Why, "Democratic operative" Chris Lehane thinks he may survive! Ford comments:

It's stupid to write all these analysis pieces saying the mayor can overcome this scandal until we know how many [more](#) scandals are coming the pike on this score. I predict several.

He suggests some leads. ...

P.S.: The traditional [pompous Tim Rutten piece](#)--attacking "the gossip sheets ... that continue to proliferate like informational vermin"\*\*\*--arrives right on cue as well. L.A.'s Pulitzer-winning paper is back to running at peak efficiency.

Bonus pomposity: Rutten writes--

Villaraigosa's personal connection with Salinas is a private issue that legitimately concerns only the two of them and their families. No one else has a moral or rhetorical right to an opinion on that aspect of their conduct. [E.A.]

Why the hell not?

\*\*\*-- ... like the ones that broke the story the [Times helped Villaraigosa](#) try to keep a lid on. Rutten also [more](#) or less admits the Times [helped](#) cover up the marital trouble of the previous L.A. mayor, James Hahn, even though it clearly affected his performance (when he insisted on going home to look after his kids!). ... 10:54 P.M.

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The Whole Souljah? Does Obama get Souljah points for [endorsing a form of "merit pay"](#) in a speech to the big teachers' union, the National Education Association? Or did he demonstrate only that he [reads the New York Times](#) ("Long Reviled, Merit Pay Gains Among Teachers"). ... Backfill: Eduwonk seems [mildly impressed](#), adding:

But, I'd still really like to see someone make the true and courageous point that while hardly perfect, No Child Left Behind isn't nearly as horrific as it's made out to be. That's post-partisan in today's climate.

Also: Is "merit pay" for good teachers nearly as important as making it easier to get rid of mediocre teachers? (You want to get hissed, tell that to the NEA.) In the successful organizations I've worked for, the positive incentives (in the form of unequal pay) weren't nearly as powerful as disincentives (in the form of fear that you might get fired if you didn't do your part). For one thing, negative incentives are highly compatible with teamwork. They get the whole organization going, including people who'll never be hot enough to get performance bonuses. They don't breed envy and backstabbing. ... 10:21 P.M. [link](#)

PredictionThe Chris Matthews Show put on an airless, non-urgent, pre-taped, vacation special--featuring airless, non-urgent predictions. In that spirit, here's mine: With the [immigration](#) semi-amnesty [bill](#) shelved, the economy growing, and various states acting to crack down on undocumented workers, wages for the unskilled--[Sen. Webb's "dispossessed workers at the bottom"](#)--will begin to rise noticeably (maybe not at a late-90s pace, but certainly much faster than they've been rising in the past few months, which have failed to live up to the [hopes of January](#), including [my own](#)). Also: The NYT editorial board will refuse to note the connection. ... Casual Empricism Corner: I'm seeing "[Help](#) Wanted" signs everywhere I go in L.A.. [Not just at In-N-Out!](#) ...

Backfill: ["Why Filling Summer Jobs is Tougher and Tougher,"](#) WSJ, July 6 ... 9:40 P.M. [link](#)

Friday, July 6, 2007

Somehow I missed this [anti-comprehensive You Tube ad](#) from June 26. I'm not sure I buy the premise--that Lindsey Graham has to be somehow paid to be self-righteous and wrong-headed. But the ad's main image sticks with you. ... 1:42 A.M.

Thursday, July 5, 2007

**More** Mirthala: Telemundo finally has someone everybody wants to see! So of course they ... [take her off the air](#). Estupido MSM. ... What's wrong with an hour Mirthala Salinas Special? They could add bilingual subtitles for the millions of new Telemundo viewers. ... But no. They'd rather please Howie Kurtz. (Or maybe it's a respectability play: "See! We're as much of a doomed hidebound media organization as all the doomed hidebound English-language media organizations!") [via [L.A. Observed](#)] 11:19 P.M.

Tuesday, July 3, 2007

Update--Nobody Covers the News Like Telemundo! This may be a first: If you watch the third local news video linked on [this LAT page](#)\*\* ("Mirthala Salinas reports Villaraigosa's separation") you'll see the news of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's separation from his wife announced last month on Telemundo by the reporter/anchorwoman with whom he has been having an affair.\*\*\*

\*\*--The LAT is now at least playing catch-up after having blown the story, beaten [by both a lone blogger and its less stuffy rival](#), the Daily News. ...

\*\*\*--Villaraigosa didn't say exactly when his relationship with the Telemundo reporter "evolved" from "friendship," but it [seems obvious from the Daily News account](#) that it's been highly evolved for some time (i.e., since months before the June separation and Salinas' Telemundo report about it). ...

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**More:** When Villaraigosa announced his marital trouble last month, the hapless LAT, in its [traditional life-draining thumbsucker](#), listed Gary Hart as one of the politicians who emerged from personal scandal "with their careers largely intact, or enhanced." I'm sure ex-Sen. Hart, now a prestigious HuffPo blogger, will be happy to learn this. ... 7:12 P.M. [link](#)

Keeping Up With .... the Bush **Immigration** Debacle!

1) ["What's their alternative?"](#) House Republicans are planning to [push improvements in border security](#), including in the "system that verifies the identities of those applying for employment. But (as [predicted!](#)) some House Democrats are still talking about taking on the whole comprehensive furball (i.e. including semi-amnesty for illegals already here). It's not over. [See also [Influence Peddler](#)] ...

2) [The NYT cites](#) the following quote as an example of the "heated rhetoric" that alienates Latino voters from Republicans:

Senator Jeff Sessions of Alabama, a leading opponent of the measure, at one point in the debate, said, "The **bill** would provide amnesty and a path to citizenship for people who broke into our country by running past the National Guard."

Vicious! They're going to have to do better than that if they're going to paint opponents as anti-Hispanic bigots. (Heck, I can do better than that.) ... P.S.: It seems to me that the people proclaiming most loudly that the Republicans were anti-Hispanic were named Linda Chavez, John McCain, George Bush and Mel Martinez, playing the "nativist" card in a desperate attempt to save their **bill**. Did they do their party any favors? ...

3) During the **immigration** debate, the number of self-identified Republicans increased for the first time in 2007, [reports Rasmussen](#):

The **immigration debate** appears to have **helped** the Republican Party while **hurting** the President and other supporters of the "comprehensive" reform legislation. Prior to the debate, 47% of voters trusted Democrats **more** on the **immigration** issue. Following the failure of the Senate **bill**, just 39% trust the Democrats **more** on the issue. In fact, among unaffiliated voters, [Republicans are now trusted more than the Democrats on immigration](#). The only other issue where the GOP can make that claim is national security.

5:35 P.M. [link](#)

Looks like eccentric lone blogger [Luke Ford](#) was **more** trustworthy than L.A. [Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa](#). (Midwife to BS: [The LAT!](#)) ... Update: LAObserved [has ongoing coverage](#). And Ford is [still dishing](#). ... 4:32 P.M. [link](#)

Giuliani [raises \\$15 million and he's doing great](#). McCain raises \$11.5 million and he's on MSM [Deathwatch?](#) I don't get it. ... So McCain spent a lot and now has to cut back. McCain's problem isn't money. It's **immigration**, and the way he presented his position with a toxic combination of self-righteousness [and](#) [dissembling](#). At least he's not running on "character"! ... [Oh wait](#). 3:48 P.M.

Monday, July 2, 2007

Bob Shrum gave a non-canned talk at a local party for [his book](#) two weekends ago: One of the mildly contrarian things he said--that it was crazy to write Obama off--is now CW, thanks to the intervening release of this quarter's [fundraising totals](#). Another resonant point isn't yet CW, though--he argued that all the Democratic health care plans are too complicated, that whoever is the Dem candidate should just say he or she plans to let everyone join Medicare and leave it at that. People know Medicare. It's hard to attack Medicare as "socialized medicine." ... P.S.: I've never quite understood why this politically appealing position is fatally flawed on policy grounds. (If there are problems with Medicare, fix them! Surely they need to be fixed even if the program doesn't get extended to younger Americans.) ... 2:01 A.M. [link](#)



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Paranoid's CornerThe Wall Street Journal's [\*instinctive assumption that some monied group must have been sponsoring\*](#) those anti-comprehensive YouTube ads ("Just who sponsors Hot Air's ad, and other similar ads popping up across the Internet, is unclear") initially seemed a hilarious, telling, near-watershed instance of MSM cluelessness! As if YouTube videos need sponsors. But then I was reminded of the controversy earlier this year over Section 202 of the lobbying reform **bill**--which [\*some alleged\*](#) would have required professional bloggers who try to drum up grassroots outrage to register--and the WSJ inquiry seemed a bit less funny and a bit **more** ominous. ... You don't think Trent Lott would love to throw bureaucratic wrenches into the grassroots machinery that disrupted his bipartisan comprehensive **immigration** plans? ...

P.S.: For some not-quite-convincing explanations of why Section 202 was nothing to worry about, see [\*Prof. Bainbridge\*](#) and [\*The Register\*](#). [Why not-quite-convincing?-ed. The **bill** by its terms applied to professional bloggers paid a substantial amount of money to drum up support for a client. But the "client" could apparently have been an employer, like Slate or Pajamas Media. Anyway, unpaid citizen activists aren't the only ones with First Amendment rights. ... When they came for the bloggers making **more** \$25,000 a quarter, I said nothing! .... ] 1:23 A.M. [link](#)

Mike Hype: I'm normally a sucker for independent third party candidates--the theory that the two party system conspires to prevent the public from electing the centrists they want has always seemed right to me. And I like Michael Bloomberg. [\*So why does his nascent anti-partisan independent presidential bid seem so out of synch with the times?\*](#) ... 12:38 A.M. [link](#)

Sunday, July 1, 2007

Burkle Buys Penthouse, Innocent Brides Suffer: **Bill** Clinton's zippy bachelor buddy continues to leave a [\*trail of tears\*](#) in his wake. ... 10:24 P.M.

Toyota [\*tries to be evil\*](#) ... 8:22 P.M.

Friday, June 29, 2007

\*\*\*\*\*

Kausfiles Special Focus Zone: As a reader aid, items that do not concern "comprehensive" **immigration** reform will be specially marked off in color. You may choose to skip these items. ... P.S.:Alert reader S.L. urged me to re-post that Senate contact list and keep it at the top of the page as the Senate considers the **immigration bill**. Good idea.[\*Here it is\*](#). Public journalism! ...

\*\*\*\*\*

Bridging the Divide: Amid all [\*the talk\*](#) about the need to transcend partisan politics in order to solve our nation's problems, it's easy to forget that the coalition opposing Bush's **immigration** solution contained (as emailer X notes) both:

progressive Democrats who believe tightening up the labor supply is the best way to improve the fortunes of the lower and middle classes and ... enforcement-first Republicans who are appalled to think that the border is not secure.

Bipartisanship! Indeed, the coalition opposing the **bill** was slightly **more** bipartisan than the coalition favoring the **bill**. In the crucial cloture vote, only 26% of the 46 Senators in the minority voting for the **bill** were Republicans, while fully 30% of the Senators in the majority voting against the **bill** were Democrats (or Vermont Socialists). It was Dems and GOPs reaching across party lines to find a bipartisan solution to the problem of a legacy-mad President's ill-considered **immigration** scheme! Somebody tell Michael Bloomberg. ...

Update: Sen. Schumer [\*lashes out at Tester, Webb, McCaskill!\*](#)... 3:07 A.M. [link](#)

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Thursday, June 28, 2007

Cloture Fails: [46-53](#). The Grand Bargain doesn't even get a majority. ... I was going to predict that the House of Representatives would take up the immigration issue anyway--actually, I still do (they'll claim to be taking a different approach). But this seems like a humiliating defeat for Bush and the self-styled, MSM-idolized Grand Bargainers. ...

P.S.: Fifteen Dems (plus Sanders) vote against cloture, making it unclear if Sen. Reid has achieved what seemed to be his unadvertised dream: A failed bill he could blame on the Republicans. ...

P.P.S.: Did Brownback vote for it before he voted against it? I thought I heard the clerk record him as a "yes" initially. ...

Update: Given the bill's failure to win a majority, isn't it a bit much for [WaPo's Weisman](#) to harp on the

"opponents' dilatory tactics and parliamentary maneuvers that have dogged the bill for weeks"

and the

"small group of Republican senators who used every parliamentary maneuver they could find to stymie progress on the bill over the past month."

Couldn't you just as well say, in hindsight, that it was a small group in the Senate leadership using every parliamentary maneuver they could find to delay the Senate's rejection of the Grand Bargain? ... Update: The same goes for [Harry Reid's complaint](#) that "the big winner today was obstruction." When a majority blocks a minority, is that "obstruction"? [But a majority was against cloture only because of last minute votes by Senators who saw the bill going down and didn't want to risk defeat in the next election--ed Isn't that my point?]

Obvious winner in today's vote: John McCain, who can now try to take the issue "off the table" in his presidential campaign.

Obvious loser: Rupert Murdoch, whose Fox News Channel took a pro-comprehensive dive. It turns out conservatives don't need Big Murdoch Media to make themselves heard any more than netroots left needs the "liberal MSM." ... 8:28 A.M. [link](#)

Comprehensive TenterhooksThe second cloture vote on the immigration bill--which could either kill it or send it to likely passage--happens this morning. It looks close. Proponents need 60 votes. That means opponents need a net switch of five votes, after losing the first cloture vote 64-35. Momentum appears to be against the bill, but the decision rests with a large block of undecideds who may be susceptible to White House arm-twisting. It's also possible pro-comprehensives may be able to draw on "hidden" supporters--Senators who voted against cloture last time but can be persuaded to flip and vote for the bill if they're needed.

National Review Online [focuses attention](#) on Webb and Ensign (potential swing "no" votes) and Bayh (a potential flip to "yes").

And here's the list of Senators the bill's proponents seem to be worried about, [according to Noam Askew](#):

Senator Bingaman (D-NM) Senator Bayh (D-IN) Senator Domenici (R-NM) Senator Coleman (R-MN) Senator Brownback (R-KS) Senator Bennett (R-UT) Senator Gregg (R-NH) Senator Bond (R-MO) Senator Murkowski (R-AK) Senator Stevens (R-AK) [E.A.]

[Some](#) news [sources](#) report that Domenici--plus Burr, Bond and Nelson--are planning to switch to "no."

Cochran and Hatch and Stabenow[are mentioned](#) as potential flips the other way.

See also: [Hawkins](#), [Malkin](#). ...



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P.S.: Emler B.T. has some phone advice for citizen-lobbyists:

Besides calling the senate office, folks should call the state chair and county chair of the senator's party. ... It would let the senator know that folks know how to do more than get riled up over an issue. Someone who tracks down his county chairman is a lot more likely to be a primary voter ...

There's not much time left, though. ... 2:50 A.M. [link](#)

"[I]f an amendment within the pigeon is not defeated," [it can screw everything up](#). Who knew? [E.A.]1:16 A.M.

Smells like Iraq Reconstruction: That "virtual fence" Bush boasts about [is running into trouble](#).

But Project 28 missed its first deadline for becoming operational about two weeks ago, and concerns are growing in Congress that the program could have problems similar to the Coast Guard's Deepwater fleet modernization...

Luckily, the "Z-visa" legalization provisions in the immigration bill don't depend on any of this fancy, high-tech border enforcement stuff actually working! 12:20 A.M. [link](#)

Wednesday, June 27, 2007

Update--Grand Bargaineer on the Run: 1) They're parodying Sen. Lindsey Graham's newfound [last-minute](#) symbolic [toughness](#) on immigration over at The Corner. ... 2) More than one source says that on Hannity's radio show Sen. Voinovich [seemed genuinely rattled](#) by the volume of phone calls to his offices by opponents of the immigration bill. That may or may not make him more likely to oppose the bill. But it's not going unnoticed. Too late to stop now. ... 3) More on the bogosity of the "touchback" gimmick--and other tough-seeming aspects of Sen. Graham's suddenly [essential](#) amendment-- [here](#). ... 4) Malkin provides [diligent running commentary](#). Senator Ensign appears to be a focus of concern. ... He seems to be playing some sort of game with his two second-order amendments [here](#). (If they pass, will he have an excuse to vote "yes.") ... 3:41 A.M.

What They Understand: Hot Air has [a video plan of action](#) for Republicans who want to do something more than phone or email their Senators. It's simple but could be high-impact. ...

P.S.: The ad says,

"Money seems to be the one thing our politicians understand."

That's a good shot at the pro-comprehensive business lobbyists. But actually, the prospect of political defeat is the thing politicians most understand. (The money helps them avoid the defeat.) That means the most effective thing that could be done to pressure pro-comprehensive Senators is to start organizing actual campaigns against them--primary challenges, but also general election challenges to Republicans from anti-comprehensive Dems, and vice-versa. It's easy to organize on the Web, and by organizing now you might get your Senator to change his or her vote. Once the vote is cast it's too late. ...

P.P.S.: According to WaPo, Sen. Lindsey Graham [now insists he won't vote for an immigration bill that doesn't add a \(phony\) "touchback" provision](#) forcing illegals to leave the country briefly in order to get their Z visas.\*\* This is a hilariously fresh get-tough posture for Graham, whose precious Grand Bargain somehow failed to include this essential element. But it's also a sign of fear. What's he scared of? Maybe [this](#). ...

Update: Mark Krikorian [suggested I'm skeptical](#) of the Hot Air plan (to demand refunds of RNC contributions). I'm not. It's a good idea. It's legitimate--but it could really screw them up! I just think the politician's ur-fear--fear of losing office--could also be triggered quickly by relatively easy, Web-based proto-campaigns. If Graham's worried, others can be made to worry. ...

\*\*--See National Review on why the ["touchback"](#) is a fool-the-yahoos fraud.

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1:12 A.M. [link](#)

Tuesday, June 26, 2007

Months Later: Freed from the need to write to fit an arbitrary printed page, Politico's Roger Simon takes enough space to explain [why the Bush/Kennedy/Kyl Grand Bargain's crucial worksite enforcement provisions won't work](#). Especially ludicrous is the **bill**'s confident command that the new employment verification system be ready in 18 months:

The **bill** requires that within 18 months of enactment all newly hired employees must be checked by something called the Electronic Eligibility Verification System (EEVS), and within three years every employer in the United States must check every employee in the United States using it.

But there are 150 million people in the U.S. workforce and some 60 million people who change jobs every year.

And this system -- which does not currently exist and has to be up and running in 18 months and completed in three years -- is going to make sure everyone in the workforce is here legally? Not a chance.

By the end of the piece it's very hard not to think of the Bush administration's equally confident predictions about rebuilding Iraq. ... See also: Sen. Cornyn on the [jam-up at DHS](#). ...

Kf Dobbsian take: Wouldn't it make sense to get an employment verification scheme up and running (for new hires) before we trigger another wave of illegals\*\* by proclaiming a sweeping semi-amnesty? Simon makes it pretty clear that as the **bill** stands the worksite system won't be ready by the time that new wave of undocumented jobseekers hits.

As I think I've said before, I'm not worried about the 12 million already here. I'm worried about the next 12 million. And the next. ...

\*\*--Which message do you think will be heard louder in impoverished Latin America:

a) "Amnesty! They've legalized almost everyone who made it to El Norte!" or

b) "[T]he **bill** includes [\\$4.4 billion](#) in immediate additional funding for ... border security and worksite enforcement efforts"?

11:36 P.M. [link](#)

Fast Work: Harry Reid's massive "clay pigeon" amendment package is [online and searchable at N.Z. Bear](#). ... 6:16 P.M.

Not so Fast, Yahoos! I actually had the following thought but then dismissed it as too paranoid. But now it seems just paranoid enough. From alert emailer D.R.:

What if the Democratic leadership allowed a couple of pro-Amnesty Senators (since they had a comfortable margin on the first vote and could afford it) to vote 'No' on the first cloture vote on the understanding that they would switch back for the second, all-important cloture vote. Then net result of this would be to convince anti-amnesty forces that we have a five vote deficit to make up when, in fact, we may need seven and misalign our efforts. ...

Right. Maybe some of the "no" votes on today's first cloture motion were Kabuki too. That would apply to GOPs as well as Dems--Askew [speculates that Cochran was given permission by the leadership to avoid obloquy](#) by voting "no" (perhaps on the condition that he'll vote "yes" next time if he's really needed). The upshot is that five switched votes might not be enough. [The Corner [prints this same email](#)]

## The Case of the Diamond Dildo

It's easy to identify five or six "yes" voters who might plausibly switch: Burr, Brownback, Ensign, Nelson, Pryor, Webb. Getting seven or eight to switch--if, say, Bayh or Hatch or Cochran were phony "nos" and switch back--would be much tougher. ... 4:35 P.M. [link](#)

Kabuki Kabuki The Senate has [voted 64-35](#) to take up the **immigration bill**. There is a second, now-crucial, cloture vote to cut off debate later this week. Emailer J.S. makes a good point:

I think the first cloture vote is now itself possibly becoming a sort of kabuki for some senators, like Burr and Bond, as they will vote to proceed today to impress the leadership and the Grand Bargainers, in hopes of keeping their relationships decent with them for future favors. These guys can afford, they calculate, to vote for cloture today, knowing they can still filibuster it on the second cloture vote. (I think the message has been gotten by most that a traditional kabuki move of voting for cloture and against the **bill** won't work anymore.)

So this raises an absolutely critical question: what will happen between a vote to proceed today and the next cloture vote? The outrage and pressure, mainly from the right, will have to triple. If people like Burr, Bond, McConnell, etc. vote to proceed today and then don't get absolutely swamped with constituent outrage, their reaction will be "that wasn't so bad, I can do it again." [E.A.]

That seems right, although with some potential second-vote switchers--like Webb--it may be important to be extra-polite about and not get their back up. Cold, polite, implacable outrage! ... If a net five Senators switch between today and the second vote, the **bill** is (again) dead. That's a much **more** plausible scenario in this case than it usually is, given all the maneuvering and posturing and pressure. Burr is a potential switcher (if his amendment is defeated) in addition to Webb. And Brownback, if he wants to do well in Iowa. ... The fate of various amendments will give lots of Senators lots of excuses to switch. ... The pro-**bill** forces [lost Hatch and Stabenow and Bayh](#) on the first cloture vote, which may become significant. 10:09 A.M. [link](#)

Looks easy! [A simple, effective anti-Graham ad](#) focusing on the no-back-taxes issue. Like a Johnny Cash song--makes its point and gets out. Except it's a Willie Nelson song. ... 9:54 A.M.

Apply Directly to Forehead: HotAir's latest [makes the point that "A vote for cloture is a vote for amnesty"](#) using the [mesmerizing mantra-like approach](#) of those HeadOn commercials. They worked! ... 9:13 A.M.

Monday, June 25, 2007

\*\*\* Caution: Contains Residual Non-**Immigration** Content\*\*\*

Now this is **more** like it: A slew of actual Shrumesque attack ads. They're short. They aren't going for viral Web hits. They are trying to demonstrate the price Senators may have to pay if they choose two-faced Kabuki (e.g., for cloture, against the **bill**) over forthright opposition. ... ["John McCain--Weak on Immigration"](#) wins the best eerily effective soundtrack category. ... Freedom Folks' [anti-Lott spot](#) seems almost as damaging as the professionally-done [Numbers USA hit](#). There appears to be no shortage of scary-looking Lott photos. ...

P.S.: Blogometer [worries about YouTubish attacks](#) in the 2008 campaign and warns that "candidates must assume some responsibility/control for the **more** notorious unauthorized efforts."

Otherwise we should expect a flurry of web based Swiftboat style attacks as consequential primaries draw close.

I'd say we should expect that flurry whether the candidates assume responsibility or not. How are the candidates going to stop them? Democracy is messy and it will get messier. ... Plus, candidates couldn't assume "control" of the ads without running into campaign finance complications, right? (The ads would no longer be "independent" expenditures, and would have to be paid for with "hard" money, I think.) 11:40 P.M.

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## The Case of the Diamond Dildo

[National Review on the state of play](#) on Tuesday's first cloture vote: "Stopping amnesty is entirely within the power of senators who oppose it." Those seven are: Bond, Brownback, Burr, Cochran, Coleman, Ensign, Webb. All they have to do is vote against cloture. ... Blocking something you claim to be against. Would that be too simple for the Senate? Do they have to try to have it both ways? ... Update:Wash Times [reports](#) on an overlapping set of swing votes. ... 11:17 P.M.

Hot Air's [latest attack ad](#) is **more** of a call to arms, or to phones. It has a terrible beat and you can't dance to it (you'll see why). But it's effective. ... 10:50 P.M.

The Grand Bargainers have [resorted to adding the Hutchison "touchback" requirement the "Z-visa" requirements](#) in the **immigration bill**. This is almost certainly a total fraud: 1) The [requirement itself is a fraud](#); and 2) even so, it will be removed by the House of Representatives. It's being added now to provide cover for timid Republicans. But I think it's a sign of weakness that the **bill's** managers had to resort to this ruse--they'd rather not have to do it. (It annoys Latino groups and its phoniness may embarrass even the Bargainers. Plus Republicans have an excuse for voting no if the **bill** comes back from conference without it.) ... P.S.: Kate O'Beirne had [speculated that Sen. Burr had been demanding "touchback."](#) Has he now been bought off for cloture? Both clotures? If so, he's a cheap date. ... P.P.S.: Burr's [contact info](#). .. 10:35 P.M.

Another citizen admaker rises to the challenge with a [hit on Lindsey Graham](#) ("Come Home Lindsey") ... It's witty. You can dance to it. But it's not mean enough! Lindsey Graham isn't going to "come home" on **immigration**. And when he doesn't change his position, do you want him to be able to "come home" by stressing his conservatism on other issues--which is what he's counting on? Or do you want to defeat him? ... Remember: The idea is to do the sort of short, vicious poll-draining 30 second spot that a challenger might run--in order to give waffling Senators a taste of what they will be in for during their next campaigns. Don't be Webby! Be TV. ... 5:35 P.M.

Polipundit [suggests six Senate candidates for lobbying](#). ... 3:03 P.M.

Does 'No' have Mo? Sen. Webb may vote against cloture, [a constituent reports](#). That would be significant. ... Update: His office [says he "has not disclosed"](#) which way he will vote. ... 12:26 P.M.

I keep thinking: Would President Clinton have pushed a grandiose **immigration** deal like the one the Senate's about to vote on? I don't think so, even if lobbies within his party wanted it. Clinton didn't try to force-feed overleveraged risky world-historical schemes the way Bush does. Welfare reform, Clinton's big domestic achievement, was wildly popular. ... There is one way for Senators to stop the madness! Tomorrow's cloture vote is the equivalent of [giving them a chance to prevent the Iraq War before it started](#). Wouldn't many of them like to have that vote back? ... 12:15 P.M.

Prof. Borjas [makes a calm, sensible case](#) against the Senate **immigration bill**. ... 11:46 A.M.

That was fast: Malkin has produced [a future anti-Graham spot](#). It's good! And the tag line worked against Senor Sasser. [Correction: It [didn't](#). But it resonates!] ... It needs that ominous-sounding negative-ad announcer guy, though. ... 11:02 A.M.

Jim Geraghty is [now](#) posting [updates](#) on tomorrow's big initial cloture vote.

[B]ill opponents should not forgive a vote to bring it back to the floor, I'm told. They're within a few votes of killing the deal before it comes back; why take the chance on a later vote?

See also [Askew](#). ... It looks close. Askew's source reports:

I've heard that they only have 55 votes on this, and no one wants to be the 58th or 59th vote for amnesty.

That is, nobody wants to be the 59th vote if there is not going to be a 60th vote. Why go out on a limb in a losing cause? That's why, [as Askew notes](#), the perception of momentum is important to both sides. ... 10:21 A .M.

## The Case of the Diamond Dildo

Kos Against the [P.O.S](#) .! DailyKos blogger [Trapper John says "it's a bill that progressives ought to vigorously oppose."](#) Especially useful is his refutation of the comprehensivist fiction that there is a fixed number of jobs "Americans won't do"--so that importing legal workers to do them would take " [pressure off the border](#)" the same way releasing water from a dam relieves pressure on the dam. In fact, it doesn't seem inconceivable that allowing in hundreds of thousands of low-wage "guest workers" could increase the demand for illegals and the "pressure" on the border. At the least, the demand isn't fixed, once declining wages are factored in:

[B]y creating a steady flow of temporary workers with no ability to stay in the country for more than a couple years, and no practical ability to fight for better wages, the number of jobs that "Americans won't do" will grow dramatically.

10:44 A.M.

Voters are still against the Senate immigration bill--50-22% in [Rasmussen's survey](#). Support for the bill is actually down a point since the poll taken before Bush mounted his latest public campaign. Opposition crosses party and ideological lines. ... If Dianne Feinstein ruled the blogosphere, I guess I'd have to pretend the unpopularity of the bill was still an open question. "Fairness"! ... 10:13 A.M.

Reminder--Comprehensive Dissembling: [Tim Russert mis-summarized](#) the provisions of the immigration bill at the beginning of his show on Sunday--and not on a trivial issue. He said the Z-visa legalization plan was "contingent on increased border security" measures. But the "probationary" Z-visa is available immediately--no waiting for "increased border security." And the "probationary" Z-visa is what legalizes former illegals, allowing them to work and travel in the U.S.. [See video around 2:00] ... I guess these are the sort of complex nuances that can only be communicated on talk radio! ... 1:12 A.M. [link](#)

Sunday, June 24, 2007

How Comprehensive Immigration Reform Is Like Training the Iraqi Army--Part XVIII: [Cong. Mark Souder rants about the enforcement fantasies](#) in the Senate Grand Bargain, which sound positively Feith-like--including:

On page 37, it says, complete the schedule for the full implementation of a biometric exit program or certification that such program is not possible within 5 years. Well, I've talked to US-VISIT. They haven't even been talked to about it. Of course they can't meet 5 years. We're talking 10 years minimum.

What are they debating over in the other body? When the American public looks at what's happening in the Capitol Building on the same day and we're passing an appropriations bill that has theoretically looking at a biometric exit maybe in the next 5 years and the other body is acting like it's done, what's going on here? [E.A.]

(The "other body" is the Senate.) 11:56 P.M.

[P.O.S](#). Cloture Watch: It looks as if [Sen. Gregg is a downbeat vote for cloture](#)--at least on the first vote (whether to take up the bill):

Among Republicans, even White House allies such as New Hampshire Sen. Judd Gregg say the administration has "zero credibility" on the border-security issue. "I will vote to proceed, but I think it is very undecided now if the bill will pass," Mr. Gregg said. [WSJ]

If you really don't want the bill to pass, of course, you don't vote for cloture. The two planned cloture votes are the key humps the bill has to get over. ... P.S.: It doesn't seem impossible to me that the immigration bill could get the 60 votes necessary for cloture and then fail to get the 50 needed to pass. If enough Senators pull a Kabuki Straddle (voting for cloture but against the bill) that's what might happen. But it's highly unlikely. Indeed, a paranoid could think that saying the bill might not pass, as Gregg does, is a cunning way to encourage wavering Senators to support cloture in the hope the bill will still fail. Sort of like saying, 'Don't worry, the bill will stall in the House.' ... 11:40 P.M.



## The Case of the Diamond Dildo

'We Have Ways of Making You Talk About 'Silent Amnesty'--The Dark Side of Bipartisanship: If radio talkers aren't enlightened and bipartisan enough to attend [symposia with Michael Bloomberg at the Annenberg School](#)\*\*--if they keep opposing the Senate immigration Grand Bargain, for example--then the government needs to tell them what to say:

[Sen. DIANNE FEINSTEIN]: This is a very complicated bill. It's seven titles. Most people don't know what's in this bill. Therefore, to just have one or two thing dramatized and taken out of context, such as the word amnesty--we have a silent amnesty right now, but nobody goes into that. Nobody goes into the flaws of our broken system.

This bill fixes those flaws. Do I think there should be an opportunity on talk radio to present that point of view? Yes, I do, particularly about the critical issues of the day.

CHRIS WALLACE: So you would revive the fairness doctrine?

FEINSTEIN: Well, I'm looking into it. As a matter of fact, Chris, because I think there ought to be an opportunity to present the other side. And unfortunately, talk radio is overwhelmingly one way.

-- Fox News Sunday, June 24, 2007 [via [Askew](#)]

1) I don't think it helps supporters of the immigration bill to broaden the fight by adding a threat to regulate radio speech;

2) What will they do about Internet radio, which isn't "scarce" the way broadcast frequencies are (giving the government no excuse to regulate it to ensure "fairness")?

3) Fox News stages [another no-holds-barred discussion](#) between a supporter of comprehensive immigration reform (Feinstein) and ... a supporter of comprehensive immigration reform (Lott)! On Fox, anyway, a Fairness Doctrine would help the yahoos;

4) Did the Fairness Doctrine encourage centrist solutions? When Congress failed to pass the SALT treaty in the Carter years--with the Fairness Doctrine in full force--weren't there similar complaints about the inability to get sensible moderate measures enacted? I remember Lloyd Cutler publishing a [Foreign Affairs article](#) or two. Then in 1987 the Fairness Doctrine was abolished. That was followed shortly by an explosion of right-wing talk radio and then the most successful bipartisan reform in recent history, the 1996 welfare reform. Maybe the problem isn't the loss of the Fairness Doctrine and the inability of the enlightened bipartisan elite to present its nuanced, complex, and contextualized views. Maybe the problem is that this time the enlightened bipartisan elite is pushing a bad bill (not that it was all that enthusiastic about the GOP-drafted 1996 welfare bill either).

P.S.: [John Rosenberg notes](#) that Feinstein went on to say that:

I remember when there was a fairness doctrine, and I think there was much more serious correct reporting to people.

"Correct reporting." Do not forget this highly mockable phrase! Does she mean "correct reporting" [like Tim Russert's](#)? ...

\*\*--Freeload Disclosure: I attended the opening night dinner of the recent [Annnenberg "Cease Fire-Bridging the Partisan Divide"](#) conference. I had a great time. But the self-congratulatory BS level was off the charts. You can [judge for yourself](#). ... 12:31 P.M.

Saturday, June 23, 2007

According to [Central Iowa's Times-Republican](#), Sen. Brownback

does not support the current immigration bill before Congress, saying there were too many problems. But he said he would support tougher border security and a guest worker program.



## The Case of the Diamond Dildo

[Noam Askew wonders](#) whether this means Brownback will vote "no" in the crucial cloture votes. But if he merely misses the vote, as he did the last one, that would have the same effect as a "no" vote. The proponents need 60. ... If Brownback just happens to be busy campaigning for President during those votes, the [Krikorian Magic Number](#) is down to 7. ... 11:33 P.M. [link](#)

Every Man a Shrum: Here's what seems like a good, and maybe semi-revolutionary, idea from reader J.R.:

One thing that strikes me (and you've alluded to) is that some of the provisions are so outrageously pro-illegal-alien that the negative ads will write themselves. Examples include giving gangbangers and repeat drunk drivers amnesty eligibility.

So why not drive the point home to some of these congresscritters by going ahead and mashing up some sample negative ads along the lines of "Senator So-and-so voted to give illegal alien gangbangers and drunk-drivers amnesty" and make sure the congresscritter staffs get a copy, or at least Youtubing them? [E.A.]

Might work! I don't have the skills to throw together a 30-second negative campaign ad, but I know there are people out there who do. If they can pull together a [trailer for bloggingheads](#), they can do an ad pointing out that Senator Lautenberg, say, voted for a legalization **bill** that didn't even require illegals to pay back taxes. For other wording clues, check [Questions 59-63 in the recent Carville-Greenberg poll](#). ...

P.S.: I wouldn't create an ad attacking someone who's currently undecided--that might just make them mad. But an ad attacking a committed pro-cloture Senator--Lindsey Graham, for example--might demonstrate to the others what will might in store for them in their next campaign if they pass this sweeping and unpopular piece of legislation. ...

P.P.S.: If you manage to spend **more** than \$1,000 you might [raise interesting campaign finance issues](#). But you can do a lot for less. ... I suspect that if this negative tactic actually has impact, incumbents will hate it and try to figure out a self-righteous way to squelch it ('take the small money out of politics'), even though it's hard to think of many things that are closer to the core of the First Amendment. ...

Send me links. I'll post any good ones. ...

Update: [This is well done](#), but it's not a negative campaign ad! ... 3:37 P.M. [link](#)

Friday, June 22, 2007

Did consultant/columnist Dick Morris lead his former client, Trent Lott, astray on **immigration**? Just a thought. To Morris, [it's all about winning Hispanic voter allegiance](#):

[T]he political stakes are largely in the symbolism of the **bill**. Whichever party is seen as supporting reform will gain a huge vote share among Hispanics, and the opponents will lose accordingly.

And remember, if it's all about the symbolism, then it's not enough for Lott and fellow Republicans like Lindsey Graham to push the semi-amnesty **bill** through. They have to push the **bill** through loudly, histrionically, while denouncing the opposition as anti-Latino--to make sure Hispanics know that the GOPs were their champions in 2007. It would be a shame to suck up to Latinos and then have the Democrats get all the credit (as Dems got all the credit with blacks after the Civil Rights Act of 1964--even though, [Morris notes](#), "Republicans backed the **bill** in far greater numbers than Democrats did"). I think this **helps** explain Lott and Graham's recent obnoxious put-downs of their opponents. [How did [comparing Mexicans to electrified goats](#) **help** Lott win over generations of Latinos?--ed That was off-message.] 6:47 P.M.

Hard Count: [Mark Krikorian has the Numbers USA vote count](#). Basically, opponents need 40 Senators to either vote "no" on cloture or to be absent. (Proponents need to reach 60 actual "yes" votes, in other words--60% of 96 senators won't do.)

The opponents now have 33, by Krikorian's count. They need eight **more**:

## The Case of the Diamond Dildo

The following 12 senators are leaning against the **bill** itself but so far are leaning toward the cloture motion which means, in reality, that they would be **helping** pass the amnesty, because if the **bill** comes to a final vote, it will pass. These are the Senators whose decisions will likely determine whether the amnesty passes or not: Bond (R-Mo.), Bingaman (D-N.M.), Burr (R-N.C.), Boxer (D-Calif.), Cochran (R-Miss.), Conrad (D-N.D.), Ensign (R-Nev.), Levin (D-Mich.), Gregg (R-N.H.), Nelson (D-Neb.), Hatch (R-Utah), Webb (D-Va.).

Close! And a bit **more** difficult than I'd thought--I wouldn't want to be in the position of relying on Barbara Boxer to torpedo the **bill**. ... But don't forget Sherrod Brown. There [may be hope for Sherrod Brown](#). ... And [what about Norm Coleman](#)? ... There's also the [mysterious Dr. Barrasso](#). [ [Update](#) ]... P.S.: Isn't it also possible that, given the **bill's** unpopularity, some Senators who would vote for cloture in the crunch are nevertheless whispering in the leadership's ear that they wouldn't mind if this whole thing somehow went away? ... 5:12 P.M. [link](#)

Drama we're not seeing: [U.S. News--](#)

"This week will basically be the last chance to pass **immigration** reform in this administration," says one activist, "and the administration is using every card they've got."

[Sen. Cornyn](#): "We'll find out on Tuesday if there's 60 senators ... It really changes minute by minute." 1:26 P.M.

[P.O.S.](#) Update: The first cloture vote has been postponed until Tuesday. ... [Alexander](#) and [Corker](#) come out against, but [Burr wavers and dickers](#). ... Noam Askew [hears Sherrod Brown is finally getting Dobbys](#) and might now be in play (he was previously counted as a "yes"). ... There's a [new Wyoming senator to lobby](#). (Don't get his back up!) ... P.S.: Between [Hawkins](#) and [Askew](#), and [The Corner](#), you'll get better coverage of the ongoing **immigration bill** intrigue than in the big MSM dailies or even Capitol Hill specialist publications. (The Hill now seems to be falling down on the job.) ...

Upshot: It looks as if "comprehensive" supporters ran into some difficulties--e.g., public opinion--but unfortunately those problems may not be insurmountable. Republicans are realizing that if Harry Reid can run the Senate like the House on this issue--with debate limited to the amendments the leadership wants discussed, and that amendment-picking power used to obtain cloture--then he can run the Senate like the House on other issues as well. (Not that there's anything wrong with that! Except when the leadership is pushing a bad **bill**, as in this case.)

Hawkins also offers this gratifying, but probably overoptimistic paragraph:

I talked to my source about the shots Trent Lott and Lindsey Graham have taken at people opposed to the **bill**. My source replied that when this whole thing started, these guys were cocky and thought they'd get this **bill** through with 70 votes, no problem. But now, because of the blogs and talk radio, they've lost the public debate on the issue and they know it. So, at this point, they're way out on a limb supporting a wildly unpopular **bill** that may or may not pass, and they're lashing out in frustration. He added that a lot of Republican senators have been offended and embarrassed by their comments and are worried that the voters will lump them in with Graham and Lott.

[Poor noble Graham's home state approval](#) seems to be tanking. ... If, as The Hill reports, Graham

is not thought of as a top Democratic target

in 2008, the Dems need to think some **more**. ... 10:51 A.M.

The Senate has now [passed the energy bill](#), clearing the way for consideration of you-know-what. According to a NUMBERS USA timeline [posted Thursday on Malkin](#),

Sen. Reid ... is still holding out a remote possibility of having the first cloture vote tomorrow night (Friday) after 7 p.m.

## The Case of the Diamond Dildo

That "first cloture" vote would only be a vote to take up the bill, not a vote to limit debate. ... Friday evening is a good time to sneak an unpopular bill onto the floor. It's also a good time to kill a bill without getting too much negative publicity. ... Update: First cloture vote put off until Tuesday. 1:24 A.M.

Sen. Trent Lott, a key righteous supporter of the "comprehensive" immigration reform, compares illegal immigrants to "goats" ("maybe not as agile") who might be stopped by an "electrified" fence, then says it was only "an analogy" and generally flails around in dehumanizing semi-coherence. A prize to the MSM outlet that first portrays Lott's comments in a way that makes it seem as if the opponents of the bill were the racists. ... Bonus points if the story forgets who said we would be better off if segregationist Strom Thurmond had been elected in 1948. ... 1:18 A.M.

Prof. Borjas finds another bit of sleaziness in that Council of Economic Advisers "White Paper" claiming "annual wage gains from immigration" of "between \$30 billion and \$80 billion." It seems that's only the gain to "US natives," and conveniently omits losses to already-present immigrants. Borjas:

[T]he CEA uses a strange definition of who "we" are: including only native-born workers and ignoring the millions of immigrants already here who are affected by yet more immigrants.

Who's being "nativist" here? 1:16 A.M.

Thursday, June 21, 2007

Mo' 'No': Sen. McCaskill comes out against cloture (on Lou Dobbs). ... 5:59 P.M.

Empty: Activists claim to have gathered a million letters in support of comprehensive immigration reform, but at their rally at the Capitol they produced empty boxes. Hmm. ... [via Insta] 5:36 P.M.

\*\*\*\* Non-Immigration Items \*\*\*\*

Hey, I gave Kerry \$300! That's chopped liver? Why can't I be a scandal too? ...P.S.:Salon's on the list. I'm as biased as Salon! 4:54 P.M.

David Ignatius on Bush:

One of Bush's top aides muses on the defining paradox of this presidency: How did a man who promised a change of tone in Washington preside over one of the most partisan and divisive periods in the country's history? Bush doesn't conduct feuds or hold personal grudges, this adviser insists. [E.A.]

Doesn't hold grudges? You think? I don't think. Let's ask Brent Scowcroft! ... 4:37 P.M.

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McConnell waffles on the immigration bill. ... Paranoid view: Publicly waffling is one way to say "I hear you" and deflect the opponents' heat, no? Then, when you do come out and support the bill, it's too late for pressure. ... 4:08 P.M.

'No' Wave? Ed Morrissey was right--Sen. Hutchison has now come out against cloture. So have Crapo and Roberts and Sununu, apparently. I've removed them from the list below. ... Cornyn's a "no" too. ... P.S.: Hatch, Coleman, Alexander, Bingaman, Webb still undecided. ... 2:43 P.M.

Kate O'Beirne has what appears to be an up-to-date list of key GOPs uncommitted on the cloture vote:

Richard Burr (N.C.), Lamar Alexander (Tenn.), Kit Bond (Mo.) ... Gordon Smith (Ore.), Thad Cochran (Miss.), ... Norm Coleman (Min.), ... Orrin Hatch (Utah), and Bob Bennett (Utah). [E.A.] [Update: Crapo, Hutchison, Roberts and Sununu have been replaced by ellipses. They say they'll vote against cloture.]

## The Case of the Diamond Dildo

She notes it is an "uphill" fight for opponents, but if I read the [Noam Askew cloture list](#) right it's doable (barely). I've highlighted the Senators who are up for reelection in 2008. The longer the process is delayed, the **more** polls emerge demonstrating the **bill's** unpopularity. (Here's [Zogby's](#). It's Zogby. And it's "Interactive." But it confirms what [Rasmussen](#) and then [NBC/WSJ](#) and [Greenberg/Carville](#) found.) ...

P.S.: Ed Morrissey has a Senate source who says [Hutchison will announce against cloture](#). [Via Malkin, who [also has a list](#).] ...

P.P.S.: But why focus only on Republicans? Not many Dem Senators relish being on the short side of a 50-25 issue either. Here are some Democrats worth lobbying who voted against cloture earlier this month:

Baucus (Mt.); Bingaman (N.M.); Boxer (Calif.); Pryor (Ark.);

Nor does it seem out of the question that some Democrats who recently voted for cloture--especially the ones who are up for reelection--might find an outpouring of popular opposition to the **bill** especially persuasive. Here are some of them:

Conrad (N.D.); Levin (Mich.); Nelson (Ne.); Reed (R.I.).

I remember when Levin's Congressman brother Sander, a vigorous opponent of the 1996 welfare reform, voted for the **bill**. He didn't want to lose his seat for a lost cause. ... Update: Note that Conrad is lumped with Dorgan as having "problems" with the **bill** [here](#). ...

P.P.P.S.: Plus of course the [Netrootsy Three](#): McCaskill (Mo.), Tester (Mont.) and Webb(Va.). The voted against cloture last time. ... And don't forget Sherrod Brown (Ohio), who un-Dobbsishly voted in favor. ...

That [Senate contact list](#) again. ... 11:30 A.M.

\*\*\*\* Non-**Immigration** Item \*\*\*\*

[Richardson](#), [nailed](#). [via [RCP](#)] 2:01 A.M.

\*\*\*\*\*

Wednesday, June 20, 2007

[George Borjas argues](#) that the same model Bush's economists used to predict a (relatively small)\$30 billion bonus from **immigration** also predicts a \$350 billion wage loss:

If we are going to accept the \$30 billion estimate as "the" estimate of the gains, then we should also accept the same model's predictions of the wage losses. And those losses are staggering.

As I understand it (which is tenuously), the staggering wage loss is balanced out, in the Bush "net" benefit calculation, by a staggering benefit to employers. ...

P.S.: Note that the [CEA "White Paper"](#) acknowledges potential negative effects on the incomes of unskilled workers, but (echoing [Kevin Drum](#)) argues that they have such a hard time of it in today's economy that we might as well screw them a little bit **more**. ... 11:38 P.M.

Eerie silence on the **immigration-bill** front, no? As if something were brewing! ... 11:13 P.M.

[L.A. Latino Dems vs. L.A. Black Dems in an off-year special Congressional election](#). Is this the year a Latino wins in Compton? The Congressional Black Caucus can make its future even grimmer if the Grand Bargain gets to the House. ... 11:07 P.M.

## The Case of the Diamond Dildo

Former frontrunning Grand Bargaineer John McCain, neck and neck in Iowa ... [with Sam Brownback!](#) At 6 percent. In fifth place. Behind Huckabee. ... 10:44 P.M.

We May Have a Winner! It won't make Harry Reid's list of 22 permissible amendments, but an alert reader has submitted what may be the best Killer Amendment I've heard so far. The amendment would say that:

Illegal immigrants who get "Z" visas can sue their employers for backpay for all the years they were not paid the minimum wage.

Or for the years they were not paid overtime, I'd add. ... The more you think about this amendment the better it gets. It screws up almost everyone's agenda but almost everyone will have a hard time voting against it. What would be their basis--sympathy for employers who (by definition) can be proven to have employed illegals to save money they should have been paying to their workers under the law at the time? Is Ted Kennedy going to be against this amendment? Sherrod Brown? Yet many big-contributing businesses--major corporations and individual entrepreneurs--might face large damages and years of lawsuits. Meanwhile, social conservatives who'd support it for bill-killing reasons would have no trouble justifying the vote to their constituents. ... Bonus coup de grace: Treble damages! ... 10:36 P.M.

The Fake Talk Express Rolls On: Remember [Sen. John McCain's shock](#) upon learning that the provision requiring illegal immigrants to pay "back taxes" had been dropped from the Senate bill? McCain professed surprise at this development, and introduced an amendment, which was adopted, that purported to stick the requirement back in. It now turns out that McCain's restore-back-taxes amendment was itself a fraud. Mark Krikorian [reports](#):

Take look at [Loophole 18 in Sen. Sessions' list](#) ; it turns out that McCain's amendment only requires that those legalized illegals applying to trade up to regular, permanent immigrant status (a green card) show they've paid taxes on income earned after they were amnestied, i.e., while they had probationary status and then the Z visa. There's no back taxes requirement to get the Z visa and obviously none for the initial phase of the amnesty, which has to be granted by the end of the next business day after applying for it. In other words, there is no requirement that illegal aliens pay back taxes to receive amnesty. [E.A.]

Meanwhile, [McCain has returned to telling voters that under the bill illegals would have to "pay back taxes."](#) ... Again, the larger point is you can't rely on anything the Grand Bargainers say. They're in full fool-the-yahoos mode. Why shouldn't voters expect that they would carry out the difficult enforcement mandates in their bill, if it passes, in the same disingenuous spirit? You can't trust them! [You're writing as badly as Andrew Sullivan--ed I know! I'm excited!]

P.S.: Sessions' [list of 20 loopholes](#) is extremely useful. Negative ad-makers: may want to pay special attention to #7. ... In practical terms, #12 seems significant. Will there be a rush on the border from those who want to pretend they were here before the January 1 cutoff? ...

\*\*--It's not clear, from Sessions' account, if execrable draftsmanship or intentional deception was involved--the amendment apparently refers to a statutory section that doesn't exist. At a minimum, those who drafted the back-taxes "fix" didn't care enough to get it right. It was just a "for show" provision anyway! Call it "reckless disregard." ... 3:29 P.M. [link](#)

Too Hot for Kabuki? Senators Chambliss and Isakson [say they will vote against cloture on the immigration bill](#). ... This could reflect momentum against the ["p.o.s."](#) or it could be that the noble, bipartisan all-powerful Grand Bargaineers told the two red-staters that they didn't need their votes to get to 60. ... 2:35 P.M.

Tuesday, June 19, 2007

60? [Noam Askew](#) and [The Hill](#) and [AP](#) have updates on the seemingly close immigration-bill cloture issue. Swing-state Dems Webb, Tester, and McCaskill may be crucial. All have amendments in the hopper that could give them cover to vote for cloture--or would give them cover, anyway, in a pre-Internet fool-the-voters age.\*\*

## The Case of the Diamond Dildo

I hope the three swing Dems take a good look at that [Greenberg-Carville poll](#) (see [below](#)). ... P.S.: Are the "left-leaning" groups said to be pressuring these Dems the fabled "netroots"? I doubt it. Aren't many netrooters "[Lou Dobbs Democrats?](#)" ... See also: [OpenCongress](#) . ...

\*\*--Note that the key cloture vote--if I read OpenCongress correctly--would apparently precede the vote on the amendments, so swing Senators wouldn't know whether their amendments have passed before they vote to shut off debate. True, if their amendments then lose, they can vote against the **bill** itself--but in that vote the **bill** only needs a majority (50), not 60. ... 7:35 P.M.

Fire Sale? McCain domain names, [on sale cheap \(so far\)](#) on E-Bay. ... [Tks. to reader M.W.] 7:22 P.M.

Greenberg and Carville Bury the Lede: At the end of the memo summarizing their latest Democracy Corps poll of swing-district voters, they note a [striking lack of support for the Senate immigration bill](#).

**Immigration:** **Immigration** reform is an area of great concern for voters in the battleground. Indeed, **more** than a quarter of voters mention **immigration** as one of their two most important concerns. Yet, proposals to address this issue garner **more** support when focused on border control **more** than legalization. In fact, voters are 22 points **more** likely to support Congressional proposals focused on increasing border security and stopping illegal immigrants from getting government benefits than one focused on legalization.

We do not find very much voter support for the comprehensive Senate **bill**. We asked without description (opposed 28 to 47 percent) and with description (45 to 49 percent). After hearing a description of the **immigration** reform passed by the Senate, a majority of independents and Republicans oppose the **bill** while Democrats are torn 47 to 47 percent. [E.A.]

This is Democratic Greenberg and Carville, remember. Not just Rasmussen! ...

Backfill: The [actual details of the poll](#) are grimmer for comprehensivists than the Greenberg-Carville summary implies.

--"Illegal **immigration**" is the #2 concern of these swing-district voters, behind Iraq but ahead of health care and the economy.

-- That "description" of the Senate **bill** was heavily front-loaded with enforcement language (it begins: "Strengthen border security first ..."). Even so, when the "path for citizenship" (after "paying a fine") and guest-worker program are included, the **bill** loses 49-45.

--By a 59-37 margin, voters actually disfavor the following statement, despite its enforcement-oriented preamble:

On **immigration**, we need to get control of the border and bar illegal employment but allow the illegal immigrants who have been here working for a long time to get on a path to citizenship.

Voters preferred a competing statement that would "require illegal immigrants to re-enter the country legally" and bar them from "getting government benefits."

--**More** than 60 percent of the voters said they'd have "serious doubts" about a Congressperson who voted:

--for "allowing illegal immigrants, who broke our laws, to stay and become citizens, giving them amnesty."

--against "declaring English the official language."

--in favor of "illegal immigrants being permanent residents, who can use our schools, health care system, and also get other benefits."



## The Case of the Diamond Dildo

You get the picture. The wording on some of these questions--especially the first--is loaded, but no more loaded than the likely wording in a campaign TV commercial attacking a Congressman who opened himself up to the charge.

--After all these words and descriptions were floating around in voters' heads, the polltakers again asked about "the comprehensive immigration reform plan being considered by the U.S. Senate." This time it lost by a 22 point margin--a bit more than when voters were asked about it cold.

Upshot: If a swing-state Congressman could be sure of totally controlling the language used in the immigration debate, he might succeed in rendering "comprehensive immigration reform" merely mildly unpopular. If he lost control of the language--as might in a fight with a decently-funded challenger--he could confront a deadly tsunami of opposition on the issue! [Thanks to alert reader S.M.] 2:03 P.M. [link](#)

Don't count on the House! Last night I ran into a veteran D.C. Democratic aide/strategist who confirmed one suspicion about the immigration bill: The House Dems are lowballing the number of votes they have for it. No way they need 70 GOP votes--though that is a number [still being reported in the press](#). ... Senators who vote for the bill thinking the House will kill it are probably deluding themselves ... P.S.: I also suspect there is a certain amount of sandbagging going on with all the [House talk about how the bill is going to be broken up](#) and maybe just the enforcement parts passed, etc. Are they trying to ease the minds of Senate fence-sitters, assuring them the House won't approve anything like the Senate's "Grand Bargain"? This suspicion is unconfirmed, however. 1:37 P.M.

Internet Killed the Kabuki Star: Regarding the venerable Senate Kabuki tactic of voting for cloture but against the bill, in the hope that the voters won't notice that you helped pass it, emailer [S.S.](#) notes:

Needless to say, voting for cloture, but against the Alito nomination, didn't do Joe Lieberman or Lincoln Chafee any good, thanks to the internet, as [Little Green Firedogs can attest](#) ...

Don't try it, Chambliss! ... 1:14 A.M.

John Edwards [seems to have come out against the Senate immigration bill](#):

Edwards said he is opposed to any measure that creates "a first-class group of citizens and a second-class group of laborers. This is what results from the current bill."

Edwards is making the "left" objection to the "temporary" guest worker program rather than the "right" objection to semi-amnesty. But--and don't stop me if I'm repeating myself--this is a bill where both the left wing objections and the right wing objections are valid. Nor are they incompatible. ... 12:35 A.M.

Monday, June 18, 2007

What's the difference between Bush's immigration plan and his Iraq War plan? A.: In one of them, we sent a competent organization to attempt a Sisyphean bureaucratic task. In the other, we're sending the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. ... Sunday's WaPo reports on the massive (329,160) [backlogs of immigrant background checks at the USCIS](#). Yet this same homeland security bureaucracy is going to efficiently check the 12 million or so illegals applying for legalization? Brilliant! Let's have them train the Iraqi army while they're at it. ... [See also [Insta](#) and [Malkin](#)] 2:44 P.M.

\*\*\*\* Alert: Non-Immigration Item\*\*\*\*

Bob Shrum makes a good point in his book, No Excuses: Al Gore is "fun to sit and have a beer with"! You'd rather backslap with Bush? (It's watching Gore campaign that's painful.) ... 3:25 A.M.

\*\*\*\*\*

## The Case of the Diamond Dildo

What Happened to the Left? I don't think the following statement by Sen. Kennedy--in [the debate](#) on Sen. Dorgan's amendment to curtail the proposed "guest worker" program--has drawn enough attention:

"I would like the chicken pluckers to pay \$10 or \$15 an hour. They do not do it. They are not going to do it. Who are you trying to kid? Who is the Senator from North Dakota trying to fool?

These are the realities, the economic realities. No one has fought for increasing the minimum wage more than I have. But you have got realities that employers are not going to pay it." [E.A.]

Weren't Democrats (especially liberal Democrats) the people who wanted chicken pluckers--and others doing lousy jobs at the bottom of the pyramid--to be paid \$10 an hour? Yet here we have the putative lion of liberalism declaring this modest goal (less than \$3/hour above the new scheduled minimum wage) to be impossible. Employers just won't do it! They'll hire illegals instead. But what if the flow of illegals is curtailed--something Kennedy's immigration bill promises to do. Why not see if a tight labor market can boost wages above the new \$7.25 minimum--instead of caving and providing employers with cheap temporary "guest workers" from abroad? If chicken pluckers organized and their union went on strike demanding \$10 an hour, would Kennedy ask them who they were "trying to kid" (and support breaking the strike with "temporary" employees)? They told us in the '60s that Kennedy was the tool of the bourgeoisie!

Most of the vocal opposition to the immigration bill, so far, has come from the right. What's important, for the coming debate on immigration, will be the strength of opposition on the left. Does anyone on the Left think the Grand Bargain will on average improve the earnings of those Americans now making \$6, \$7, \$8 and \$9 an hour? Paul Krugman [doesn't seem to](#). A year ago [he wrote](#) [\$]:

[W]hile immigration may have raised overall income slightly, many of the worst-off native-born Americans are hurt by immigration -- especially immigration from Mexico. Because Mexican immigrants have much less education than the average U.S. worker, they increase the supply of less-skilled labor, driving down the wages of the worst-paid Americans. The most authoritative recent study of this effect, by George Borjas and Lawrence Katz of Harvard, estimates that U.S. high school dropouts would earn as much as 8 percent more if it weren't for Mexican immigration.

That's why it's intellectually dishonest to say, as President Bush does, that immigrants do "jobs that Americans will not do." The willingness of Americans to do a job depends on how much that job pays -- and the reason some jobs pay too little to attract native-born Americans is competition from poorly paid immigrants.

Anybody else?

P.S.: [Yglesias suggests](#) it's "baffling" that I oppose "comprehensive" reform on the grounds that it will increase income inequality given that (in his characterization) I'm "the author of [a book about why we shouldn't care about](#) income inequality." That's a reasonable challenge to raise--I'll defend my position on inequality later. But I'm not talking about inequality here. I'm talking about wages at the bottom, and whether Democrats are going to endorse something that makes them significantly, measurably worse.

Update: I Rest My Case! Kevin Drum [sneers](#) about my "new role as champion of the common man," arguing that if, in fact, chicken pluckers unionized and struck demanding \$10 an hour I'd "denounce Democratic support for a strike like this." I might! I think Wagner Act unions bring unnecessary inefficiencies, and wages (above the minimum) are generally best set by the market. If the market sets the wage at \$7.50, the better way to boost the incomes of those workers is through the Earned Income Tax Credit, which I've consistently supported. But when the market raises wages above \$7.50--due to the sort of tight labor supply we had in the late 90s--I'm all for it. Kennedy isn't. Confronted with the possibility of a natural market increase in wages at the bottom, Kennedy reacts by attempting to prevent it by importing additional "guest workers."

How pathetic is it that, instead of defending the position of low-wage workers when they finally might have the market on their side, earnest leftish bloggers like Drum are suddenly more concerned with snarking at people like me!

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(And here I thought it was Kinsleyesque neoliberals who hunted for hypocrisy while Rome burned.)

Of course, Drum has written, we're [only talking about "high school dropouts."](#) And

if we're really worried about high school dropouts, everyone agrees they have way bigger problems than competition from illegal **immigration** anyway.

So pluck 'em!

P.P.S.: Drum notes that the Borjas/Katz study has (since Krugman wrote his 2006 column) cut its estimate of the negative effect of Mexican **immigration** in half, to 3.6%. a) That's not chopped liver, especially since we are trying to get wages at the bottom to go up; b) Anecdotal evidence suggests worse--talk to dry wall installers in South Central; c) Drum argues the Senate **bill** would raise low-wage workers' bargaining power by legalizing illegals. But that assumes that there won't be a new wave of legalization-seeking illegals as there was after the 1986 legalization; d) Krugman, for his part, doesn't seem to have shifted position since last year--he still argues (in the [more recent column](#) linked above) that earlier waves of **immigration** "depressed the wages of the less skilled," and that the current **bill** isn't worth the "price that must be paid." ... 2:42 A.M.

Sunday, June 17, 2007

\*\*\*\* Alert: Non-**Immigration** Item\*\*\*\*

Where's the Zip? My Slate colleague Daniel Gross [writes a whole piece](#) on how the Bush administration is blocking the Whole Foods/Wild Oats merger "to punish political opponents." But what political opponent? Is the target "liberals," on the grounds that the clientele of both chains are probably 95% Democratic? That's a pretty diffuse method of punishment--"Vote Republican or pay through the nose for sprouted wheat!" At other times, Gross makes it sound as if Bush is punishing some **more** specific enemy--yet the only victim he identifies is Daniel Gross of Slate, whose Connecticut town might be deprived of a Whole Foods outlet. This is paranoid. Maybe the Bushies are clean on this one. ... I mean, it's not as if Wild Oats' biggest shareholder is **Bill** Clinton's business partner and bachelor buddy who's also busy trying to buy up seemingly every available media property in advance of Hillary's 2008 run, right? ... [Right?](#)10:37 P.M.

Saturday, June 16, 2007

Bush Blows Up His Party: Glenn Reynolds [argues the Administration is wrong](#) to think it's up against only the "[right wing blathersphere](#)." ... 2:12 P.M.

K-Lo has [an update](#) on what is expected to happen to the **immigration bill** next week in the Senate. It seems that Harry Reid has figured out a way to run the place like the House. But it's not completely clear that there are 60 votes for cloture, and room for public pressure to change swing Senators' minds--or at least their votes. ... P.S.: See also Right Wing News' [insider report](#), which notes why the key vote will be cloture--because the final vote will be familiar fool-the-yahoos Kabuki:

[T]he cloture vote to end debate will be the "real" vote on the **bill** because if debate is closed off, the **bill** is sure to pass. Then, what will happen is that the votes for the **bill** will be counted, and a few senators who are afraid that their election prospects will be jeopardized by a "yes" vote, will be allowed to vote against the **bill**. This enables those senators to tell their constituents that they voted against the **bill**, but it will still allow them to collect campaign contributions from lobbyists who have a better understanding of how things work, and know that the **bill** couldn't have been passed without their support. [E.A.]

I'm not sure this old trick works post-Web. Too many constituents are onto it. ... **More** Kabuki Check: Interestingly, Hawkins' source still thinks Reid still "would prefer to see this **bill** go away," and that "a lot" of Senators are voting for "a bad **bill**" with the hope and expectation that the House will kill it. ... 12:37 P.M.

Friday, June 15, 2007

## The Case of the Diamond Dildo

So you [have apples](#) in that basket! [On bloggingheads, I try to explain](#) why Giuliani's [second-billed "commitment"](#)--

I will end illegal **immigration**, secure our borders, and identify every non-citizen in our nation

is really code for "I support legalization." ... 4:52 P.M.

It's not just Rasmussen: [First Read notes](#) underpublicized results in the [latest WSJ-NBC poll](#) indicating public dissatisfaction with the **immigration** "grand bargain"--including disapproval of the very provisions many MSM outlets claim popular support for.

The latest NBC/Wall Street Journal has plenty of numbers suggesting that getting the **immigration bill** through the Senate -- and then the House -- won't be easy. In it, 46% believe **immigration helps more** than it **hurts**, while almost the same amount (44%) think the opposite. In addition, majorities oppose some of the Senate **immigration bill's** legalization provisions: 64% are against allowing illegal workers to receive an automatic work visa if they pay a fine, and 55% oppose allowing illegal workers apply for permanent residency if they return home to their countries and pay additional fines. [E.A.]

Only 20% called the **bill** an "acceptable compromise." 41% said it "makes too many concessions to illegal immigrants by allowing them to remain in the United States." \*\* ...

P.S.: The stark conflict between the WSJ-NBC results on the legalization plank and the [NYT](#) and [LAT](#) results on the same plank demands a [Mystery Pollster](#) explanation. I suspect it will conclude that the answers to these questions (like the answers to welfare reform questions) are highly dependent on the way the queries are worded--words like "automatic," however accurate, will be a turnoff, while words like "start" and "path" and "apply" will be appealing. ... But the answer to the basic "do you support the **bill**" question does not seem sensitive to wording. If there's a single poll that's showed a majority supporting the actual overall **bill**, I haven't seen it. ... Update: E-mailer R. says I haven't gone far enough:

Actually, can you find a single poll that shows a quarter of the population supporting it?

\*\*--Another 20% said "it makes too many concessions to those who want illegal immigrants to have to return to their native countries." Which it does! The **bill's** "temporary" worker program, [requiring a return home every two years and permanent return after six](#), seems indefensibly harsh. I deny that this left-wing criticism of the **bill** translates into de facto support, or is incompatible with the right-wing criticism of the **bill's** legalization provisions. (You could want new, legal guest workers to have a path to citizenship but existing illegal workers to be treated less generously.) They're both criticisms of the **bill**. The NBC-WSJ question falsely makes respondents choose between them. ... N.B.: The first version of this post hideously misread the NBC-WSJ poll. I've cleaned it up. ... 1:49 P.M. [link](#)

Note: I am not single-mindedly obsessed with the **immigration** issue. [This guy](#) is single-mindedly obsessed with the **immigration** issue. ... 1:03 P.M.

Only an angry minority supports the "popular" **immigration bill**?

Forty percent (40%) of American voters say that President Bush is doing a good or an excellent job on taxes. A [Rasmussen Reports](#) national telephone survey found that 39% say the same about his handling of the economy.

At the other end of the spectrum, just 15% say he is doing a good or an excellent job on **immigration**. [Emphasis and link added.]

Fifteen percent. That is getting down near the percentage who think their automatic garage door is sending them semaphore signals from outer space. ... Isn't this finding is flat incompatible with the idea that, ["A majority of Americans support our proposal," as John McCain asserted this week](#), or that it is opposed only by a "very intense minority" of conservatives? What has George Bush's handling of **immigration** been other than the pursuit of McCain's **bill**? ... Update: Alert reader C.W. notes that some of the disapproval of Bush probably reflects voters

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unhappy that he'd apparently (at the time) failed to get an [immigration bill](#) through, though he was campaigning for its revival. But another Rasmussen poll at about the same time showed [only 20% wanted the Grand Bargain revived](#). ... 12:42 P.M.

Yes, John Edwards does seem like the obvious Dem presidential candidate to seize the gaping, near-irresistable opening and oppose the [immigration bill](#), as [MyDD's Tarheel](#)--alertly flagged by [Blogometer](#)--argues. I was hoping for Obama. But Edwards is losing. He needs to make a move. And if you really care about incomes at the bottom of the distribution--which is what I thought Edwards' campaign was all about--then you can't not oppose this [bill](#), I think. ... Tarheel notes that the [immigration bill](#)

is hugely unpopular. Most americans outside the blogosphere heavily oppose it. Union workers seem unhappy with it. Americans (outside the blogosphere) instinctively don't believe in rewarding illegal behavior with citizenship. This would bring lots of free press for Edwards and distinguishes him from others on the Democratic side. I'm fairly certain this wouldn't lose any votes in Iowa or NH or SC.

11:24 A.M.

Lott Lashes Out! GOP Senate whip Trent Lott [attacks](#)"these talk-radio people who don't even know what's in the [bill](#)." The [New York Times reports](#):

Comments by Republican senators on Thursday suggested that they were feeling the heat from conservative critics of the [bill](#), who object to provisions offering legal status. The Republican whip, [Trent Lott](#) of Mississippi, who supports the [bill](#), said: "Talk radio is running America. We have to deal with that problem."

At some point, Mr. Lott said, Senate Republican leaders may try to rein in "younger guys who are huffing and puffing against the [bill](#)."

[E.A.] a) 'Feeling the heat!' b) It's of course in the interests of the [bill](#)'s backers to make it seem as if opposition only comes from "talk radio," and not, say, from the AFL-CIO--or from ordinary non-radio Democrats and Republicans, for that matter; c) Is that Rush you're talkin' about? d) Is Lott still smarting from the lack of support he got from the GOP grassroots after his [appalling Strom Thurmond comments](#)? e) Is he making a play for Strange New Respect? f) Wasn't it Lott who criticized as "not helpful" Bush's bashing of GOP opponents of the [bill](#)? [I think it was](#). g) Isn't the obvious pro-[bill](#) strategy to let the opposition calm down, not stir it up? h) I thought it was [John McCain who didn't know what was in the bill](#). ...

Update: Instapundit [sees a pattern](#) ...

A year ago, Trent Lott was saying he was ["damn tired" of PorkBusters](#), and now the GOP is all about fighting the pork. Difference? They lost an election by listening to him. Now what will they be saying after the next election?

Lott was on the verge of turning into an intriguing, nothing-to-lose, truth-telling character a while back. What happened? ... Possible answer: He is telling the truth--and the truth is he's one of "the plump complacent emirs of the one-party-state of Incumbistan," as [Mark Steyn puts it](#). ... 2:34 A.M.

It's Back. It's Beatable. Given the [revival](#) of the [immigration](#) "Grand Bargain," William Rusher's Weyrich-like pessimism [looks disturbingly prophetic](#):

The odds are better than even that the coalition [supporting the [bill](#)] will simply regroup, try again, and this time roll over the opposition like a Sherman tank.

The coalition is simply too powerful for anything as unfocused as mere American public opinion to resist for long.

In other words, what the Establishment wants, the Establishment gets. I'm not so sure. a) The Founding Fathers made it [quite difficult](#) to pass legislation--even popular legislation, and b) this legislation is [not popular](#) (politicians worried about keeping their jobs won't be as gullible as the MSM when it comes to [tendentious](#)



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[polls](#)). Opponents should be able to block the **bill**. For one thing, there's always the possibility that many Senators are supporting the **bill** now in the hope that it will be blocked later, allowing them to say they voted to solve a problem without having to live with their disastrous "solution." ...

P.S.: If the Establishment always got its way, affirmative action would not be on the ropes, sanctions against Cuba would have been lifted years ago, the SALT treaty would have been ratified, Nixon would have gotten his guaranteed income back in 1972, the entitlement problem would be under control, and Tim Russert would be **more** popular than Taylor Hicks. ...

One suggestion for opponents: Instead of phone call and email campaigns--the Senators all know by now that lots of people are angry--how about some street demonstrations? It worked in the '60s. The trick would be including Democrats, and keeping the protests so free of fringe elements, violence, and anything that could be characterized as anti-Latino prejudice that they couldn't be tarred by the media (which would be looking to pitch opponents as angry bigots). ... 1:39 A.M.

Thursday, June 14, 2007

Fox is [reporting an imminent agreement](#)--significantly including Sen. Reid--to grease the skids for passage of the Senate **immigration bill** via a Fool-the-Yahoos addition of \$4.4 billion in enforcement spending. ... I'm about to get on a plane and can't check to see if this Fox report is correct. But clearly this is no time to stop paying attention. ... 3:06 P.M.

"It's much [better for your party to be dissatisfied with your candidates](#) than for the other party to be dissatisfied with your candidates" ... or dissatisfied with its candidates. 7:45 A.M.

A potential anti-comprehensive primary challenger to waffling Georgia Republican Sen. Saxby Chambliss now [says he won't run](#). I don't know what this means for the **immigration bill**, but it means something. ... 7:24 A.M.

The Hail Mitt Play? I don't quite understand why John McCain is picking a fight with Mitt Romney, given that there are two other GOP contenders who poll better than Romney nationally. Won't this tactic do for McCain what attacking Howard Dean did for Dick Gephardt? Tom Edsall's [brutal HuffPo analysis](#) discerns a desperate rationale, but also argues:

The McCain attack violates the GOP orthodoxy embodied in Ronald Reagan's 11th Commandment, "Thou shalt not speak ill of a fellow Republican." If the tactic fails, the McCain campaign may be effectively over.

[E.A.] P.S.: If Republicans really favor McCain's legalization plan, as the [LAT claims](#), why is he tanking again? [You almost had a nice little non-**immigration** item there--ed A gradual withdrawal is all you can hope for. During the recent weeks of kf's ... let's call it kf's "special focus" on **immigration**, the stats have held up. Until yesterday. Yesterday, they collapsed. I suspect this means readers think the debate is over and the **immigration bill** is dead. But it's not, and " [the next few weeks are critical](#)."] ... 12:22 A.M.

Reminder: [Here's the argument](#) that applies to the [LAT poll](#) showing (as do other polls) that majorities approve of allowing illegal immigrants to "start on a path to citizenship" if they pay fines, etc.. (Note also the Times' skillful use of gratuitous, comprehensivist-approved softening words "start" and "path.") ... Rasmussen's [argument against LAT-type questions is different](#), but not incompatible: he thinks the public is in fact willing to accept "paths to citizenship" as part of a compromise that would also secure the borders. But the public thinks the Senate **bill** won't secure the borders. ... In any case, the [Senate bill itself was opposed 50-23% in last week's Rasmussen poll](#), a finding [reinforced this week](#). The LAT could have countered Rasmussen by asking voters what they thought about the actual **bill**. They [didn't](#). Why take chances? ... 12:12 A.M.

Wednesday, June 13, 2007

Don't Calm Down, Part XVIII: The latest from Roll Call [\$]--



## The Case of the Diamond Dildo

Senate conservatives have been warned by Republican leaders that they must either accept a series of largely symbolic floor votes on a handful of amendments to the [immigration](#) reform legislation or see themselves shut out of the process altogether when the chamber resumes work on the [bill](#) later this year, GOP lawmakers and aides said Tuesday.

What's so terrible about being "shut out of the process," if you oppose the [bill](#)? After all, if you make it better it might pass [more](#) easily. And if you can only offer "symbolic" amendments you can't even make it better. ... Also see [Kate O'Beirne](#) on the [Establishment's](#) Drive to Revive:

There is Senate speculation that there will be a resurrection of the [immigration](#) reform [bill](#) during the last week of June to increase pressure on dissenting Senators who would risk the wrath of colleagues by delaying the July 4th recess.

P.S.: Why the huge business push for legalization when the economy and the stock market are going great guns under the status quo? Here's a [disturbing theory](#) from one of Rich Lowry's readers:

Chertoff and Kyl both seem to have answered that question recently, Kyl in his Wall Street Journal interview and Chertoff on Fox News yesterday: because businesses are starting to worry about efforts to enforce [immigration](#) laws at the local level. One state in the vanguard of that effort is Kyl's (and McCain's) home state of Arizona, where the legislature has passed numerous laws (usually vetoed) on the issue, and where the public voted for Prop 200 back in 2004.

To me that says something far [more](#) ominous than that Congress is being disingenuous or naïve on the matter. Far from simple being empty promises, this amnesty [bill](#) is actually a blatant attempt to head off any attempts at enforcement at all.

It also means the current [immigration](#) debate isn't as important as obsessive bloggers have been making it seem. It's [more](#) important! And it's not important to the GOPs so much as the Dems--because it means business is acting now to avoid what it perceives as a coming labor shortage in which it will have to substantially raise wages at the bottom, altering the economic contours of the economy in favor of unskilled workers and their families. You wouldn't think that--whatever Republicans do--a Democrat like Harry Reid would really want to move a [bill](#) that would prevent such a dramatic, progressive shift, would you? ...

P.S.: You get paid less but you get a union card. Rep. Barney Frank [acknowledges that the influx of immigrant workers is "bad for blue-collars," according to National Journal](#) [via [Corner](#)]. But, hey, Dems will compensate by increasing union power!

[I]mmigrants can [help](#) elect Democratic majorities, and "if [a Democratic Congress] were to significantly strengthen unions, then you would offset the negative effect on the income of workers," he said.

I was going to write a post about how this illustrates a clear difference between neoliberals and paleoliberals--neolib Clintonomists relying on tight labor markets to raise wages, paleolibs disdaining the market and relying on cumbersome inefficient union mechanisms to maybe, somehow replicate what the market could have achieved without them. But [even the cumbersome inefficient unions of the AFL-CIO aren't buying](#) Frank's rationalization. ... 2:43 P.M.

Opposition to the "Grand Bargain" from the left--not the liberal left, the left left, described at [PoliticalAffairs.Net](#). ... This is actually a highly-useful, detailed article on the lobbying push behind the [bill](#).

The National [Immigration](#) Forum and the DC umbrella group it initiated, the Coalition for Comprehensive [Immigration](#) Reform, were key players in this strategy. Behind them was the Essential Worker [Immigration](#) Coalition, which brought together over 40 of the largest corporate trade and manufacturing associations in the country, under the aegis of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. ...

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These Washington groups supported all the compromise **bills** embodying the legalization/enforcement/guest worker tradeoff, beginning with the original Kennedy/McCain **bill** in 2005. The same argument was used to justify them all: "It's not possible to get legalization without including **more** enforcement and guest worker programs."

Note that the argument was not that 'it's not possible to have enforcement without legalization.' It was the reverse. ... 9:22 A.M.

Failure Is An Option, Part XVIII: From [The Hill](#), some hearteningly downbeat quotes on the **immigration bill's** prospects:

"It may be too little, too late," said Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) ... [snip]

Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff suggested to reporters that if the Senate does not act "within the next couple weeks" the **bill** could be dead for the 110th Congress. "As long as we can get the **bill** back up within a very short period of time, there is no harm done," said Chertoff, who said that the Georgians' funding plan was still on the table. "What we can't afford to do is let this languish beyond that period of time."

[E.A.] Update: But see other, [more ominously optimistic takes](#). ... 2:00 A.M.

Tuesday, June 12, 2007

Fool the Yahoos II: Rich Lowry still isn't paranoid enough! He [seems to think](#) the call by undecided GOP senators Chambliss and Isakson

for an emergency supplemental **bill** to fully fund the border and interior security initiatives contained in [the Senate **immigration bill**]

shows that "democracy works" and they are coming around to sensible opposition to the **bill**. As Kate O'Beirne points out, the proposal seems much **more** like a transparent ploy to give these senators pro-enforcement cover so they can vote for the **bill**. I think veteran comprehensivist Sen. McCain even publicly suggested this maneuver. ... Democracy works, but for Senators eager to please business lobbyists, pander to Latinos--and who have secret contempt for their constituents--it will be a last resort. ...

P.S.: O'Beirne predicts [anti-bill Senators "will insist that the additional funding produce measurable results"](#) before considering any sweeping reform." ...

P.P.S.: Noam Askew is paranoid enough! He suggests that Chambliss and Isakson are [positioning themselves to support the bill](#) if they can somehow avoid the voters wrath. ... Malkin, also appropriately worried, [notes reports that McConnell and Lott are on the verge](#) of flipping 15 Republican senators. ... Meanwhile, Paul Weyrich [thinks opponents of the bill are up against](#) what Al Gore would call ["powerful forces"](#):

In all of the years I have been here I never have known when the establishment really wants something that the establishment cannot obtain it. And the establishment really wants this **bill**.

It's no time to calm down. ... 5:02 P.M. [link](#)

Monday, June 11, 2007

Kos v [P.o.s.](#) ! Yahoos to the right, yahoos to the left. Blogometer's Conn Carroll notes that the recently elected Kos-style Dem candidates (Tester, Webb, Boyda) [do not seem to be lamenting the immigration bargain's collapse](#). ... He also has Kos himself busting pompous Balz. ... Backfill: [Fishwrap added McCaskill to the list](#) of anti-comprehensive netroots Dems. ... P.S.: On the right, even ["yahoo"-bashin' Bill](#) Kristol has bailed on the **bill**--

I would point fingers at the drafters of the **bill**. The **more** this **bill** was debated, the less able people were to defend it substantively.

## The Case of the Diamond Dildo

1:55 P.M. [link](#)

Sunday, June 10, 2007

The Fool-the-Yahoos Surge: Meetings have been held, tactics adopted, talking points synchronized. The new Bush counterinsurgency strategy to reverse the course of the immigration debate seems to have two components:

1) Exude confidence. "We are winning" ... sorry, that's [what Bush said about the war in Iraq](#). Here's what his Commerce secretary said about the immigration Grand Bargain: "This bill is alive and well .... I have no doubt. This is going to go through ...."

2) Stress all the enforcement provisions in the bill, while pretending you've gotten the message:

"I know some of you doubt that the Federal government will make good on the border security and enforcement commitments in this bill ... [W]e are now committing more resources than ever before to border security, doubling the number of Border Patrol agents, building hundreds of miles of fencing, and employing advanced technology, from infrared sensors to unmanned aerial vehicles. The bill builds on this progress by requiring that we meet border security objectives before certain other provisions can take effect."

--President Bush, [President's Radio Address](#) , June 8. [E.A.]

"Because I think a lot of people have concerns about security and our message is: 'We heard you. Take a look at what's going on with this bill.'" ...

"If you take a look at the bill, it is the largest investment ever in border security. ... This bill says ... harsh punishments for employers." ...

"And furthermore, we have a mechanism now for knowing who the illegals are, where they are, whether they're working, whether they're breaking the law and if they're not working and they're not obeying the law, they get sent out."

--White House Press Secretary Tony Snow, on various Sunday shows. [E.A.]

This is all in keeping with the [Peggy Noonan view](#) that the White House really does think its own GOP base is composed of yahoos who can be fooled with a little talk of enforcement.

kf Balking Points

1. If all these enforcement measures are so wonderful, why not enact just them and drop the questionable legalization part? Bush is holding the parts of the bill everyone says they want hostage to the parts he wants.

2. If we tried the enforcement parts first, then we wouldn't have to trust the federal government. We could make sure the measures work before we go ahead with legalization (and attract a new wave of legalization-seeking illegals).

3. The bill does require "that we meet border security objectives before certain other provisions can take effect." Unfortunately, legalization is not one of those "certain other provisions." Legalization is immediate under the bill.

4. "[I]f ... they're not obeying the law, they get sent out." Of course, most of them will be obeying the law ... because what was illegal will have been legalized! As for whether the government will actually get it together to send people home if, say, they've come illegally after the January, 2007 cutoff--well, again, let's see whether that "investment" in enforcement pays off.

Bonus BP:

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5. If illegals ["live in fear"](#) under the status quo, as we're told, then how is the status quo "silent amnesty"?

But I'm glad Bush mentioned the aerial drones! ... 10:16 P.M. [link](#)

Straight Fake Talk: In a video clip [available on the NYT site](#), John McCain pretends to lowans that he shares their anger that the border fence didn't get built. [Go 2 minutes into the clip] ... 5:05 A.M.

Saturday, June 9, 2007

Google Alert Gold: RightWingNews' John Hawkins talks to a GOP Hill aide and gets some [good-as-MSM tick-tock](#)\*\* on how the **immigration bill** crumped last Thursday. Hawkins then asks the aide "why he thought so many Republicans had been supporting such an incredibly unpopular **bill**." Three reasons come back:

First off, there was what he referred to as the "Rovian School of thought," which says that passing this **bill** would capture the Hispanic vote for the GOP for decades to come.

But wait--I thought the Senators were doing it because [it was viewed as vital within policy circles](#)! Don't disillusion me.

P.S.: RWN's source also explains why all those conservative amendments--the official sticking point in the deliberations--aren't insignificant:

The "Grand Compromise" crowd didn't want a lot of these amendments to be voted on because either some of the amendments would have been accepted and it would have killed the **bill** or alternately, they would have had to vote against common sense enforcement measures and made themselves look bad.

I still hope Sen. DeMint hangs tough and refuses any agreement to whittle down the list of amendments and go forward. Why make the Grand Bargaineers look bad when you can actually kill the Grand Bargain? ...

\*\*--Hawkins doesn't ask what they ate, though. You always have to ask what they ate. ... 10:57 P.M.

"Immigrant **Bill Hurts** Martinez at Poll": Senate GOP Grand Bargaineer Mel Martinez's approval ratings have ["plunged" from 48 to 37 percent approval](#) in his state, Florida--an all-time low for him, reports the Orlando Sentinel. ... P.S.: Isn't Florida, with its large Hispanic population, supposed to be one of the **more** comprehensive-friendly states? Could a Democratic presidential candidate actually use the Bush **immigration bill**'s unpopularity to win Florida's toss-up electoral votes in 2008? ... [Thanks to emailer P.S.] 9:40 P.M.

Balzbusters! Politico's Roger Simon [joins the backlash](#) against [pompous Dan Balz CW](#)! Like [Jacob Weisberg](#), Simon argues that, when it comes to "comprehensive **immigration** reform," failure is a pretty good option. ... P.S.: DNC chair Howard Dean says that in the recent midterms Republican "anti-immigrant fervor ... **helped** them in a few races"? Simon buried the lede--I thought the accepted lesson of '06 was that it didn't **help** the GOPs, or maybe even **hurt** them. But Dean should know. I defer to his expertise! Someone tell Sen. Kyl. ... 9:09 P.M.

Sorry, [K-Lo](#) : Republican Sen. John Kyl is still working to resuscitate his awful **immigration** "bargain," according to [Politico](#). I guess he hasn't ["come home"](#) after all. ... P.S.: Maybe he wasn't such a great "statesman" to begin with? Just a thought. ... 8:54 P.M.

Cocoon Chronicles: But All Our Sources Say It's 'Vital'! Shailagh Murray and Jonathan Weisman of the Washington Post say the ["grand compromise" isn't dead yet](#)--the "chief architects" are "confident that they could resurrect it." The WaPo reporters then declare:

Within policy circles, **immigration** reform is viewed as vital, addressing both the growing demand for workers and the social costs of an illegal underclass. [E.A.]

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Well, there's policy circles and there's [policy](#) [circles](#). How does this sentence--not just biased, but amateurishly biased!--get into the Washington Post? You could just as well have written, in 2002:

Within policy circles, toppling Saddam Hussein by force is viewed as vital, addressing both the threat of weapons of mass destruction and the need to establish a new dynamic in the region.

I don't remember reading that one. ... P.S.: The next WaPo sentence, of course, is "The public also generally supports the idea." See [below](#) for why this is b.s.--or see [Rasmussen](#) and [Gallup](#). ... P.P.S.: I'd never work for an organization that would botch a big story as thoroughly as the Washington Post Company's flagship has botched this year's **immigration bill** coverage! ... Oh, wait. 1:58 A.M.

Friday, June 8, 2007

"Voters wanted an **immigration** deal": A quick word on [those polls](#) MSM writers--e.g. [Dan Balz](#)--are using to suggest that the Senate thwarted the popular will in blocking "comprehensive **immigration** reform." I'd been puzzled myself by the consistent polls showing that a) the comprehensive **bill** itself was [wildly unpopular](#), yet b) --and these are the polls emphasized by the MSM--the controversial "earned legalization" planks, when they are described to voters, [win majority approval](#).

But [Mystery Pollster cleared it up for me](#). The key is the [Gallup finding](#) that only half of the public is paying much attention to the **immigration** debate. Those who are paying attention oppose the **bill** 30% to 11%, but 58 % "don't know enough to say." On this basis, Gallup editor-in-chief [Frank Newport calls](#) those who oppose the **bill** a "vociferous minority"--apparently believing that if only **more** voters paid attention they'd endorse the **bill**, because [when they're given the questions](#) describing various paths to citizenship for illegals who "have a job" and "pay back taxes," they mostly say yes.

The flaw in this "scientific research," [MP points out](#), is that by Newport's own admission these are mainly voters who aren't paying attention and are hearing these terms for the first time, so "their reactions may vary greatly along with the text of the descriptions provided." If they react positively to loaded words like "job" and "pay taxes" when they first hear them, that's no guarantee that they'd endorse the Senate **bill**'s provisions if they starting following them closely (and began to hear other terms, like "immediate legalization" and "sanctuary").

We simply don't know how the 58% would react if for some reason they started paying attention--though Gallup's own finding that those who are paying the most attention are the most lopsidedly (61% to 17%) opposed to the **bill** is hardly evidence that they'd support it. Indeed, when Gallup described to voters various alternatives, the most popular, at 42%, was "to require illegal immigrants to leave, to but allow them to return if they meet certain requirements over a period of time." That sounds a lot like--yikes--deportation, no? Another 14% wanted flat deportation with no possibility of eventual return. 42+14=56.

Update: [Matthew Yglesias](#) talks about "[t]he objective social conditions militating in favor of reform." Wow, that brings back memories. ... 4:55 P.M. [link](#)

Don't calm down: The White House says [Bush is going to keep pushing the "grand bargain" in a Capitol Hill meeting next week](#). This could mean he's planning a surge-like effort, or it could just be part of the gradual let-down-easy process in which he learns that it's not really about the amendments--the Senate is just not that into him. ...

P.S.: Sen. Salazar says [the bill "may return in July."](#) according to the Denver Post. Why? Because "Failure on **immigration** reform is not an option." ...

P.P.S.: At some point, won't the President and others involved (McCain, Lindsey Graham, Lott, etc.) realize that as long as they keep pushing the **bill**, even in the press, they keep the pain coming (even as they impress reporters with their bipartisan statesmanship)? As First Read points out, [the big winner yesterday wasn't the conventional pick](#):



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Oddly enough, the shelving of the [immigration bill](#) could actually [help](#) McCain. The less the issue is brought up, the better for McCain ...

Right. If the [bill](#) definitively dies, McCain might even collect those character points for sticking with his position. ... It's like the BMW Z4, which gets better-looking when you know that it flopped! [Can you pick an analogy that resonates with [more](#) than, say, three readers?--ed I need to maintain my fragile coalition.]

Update: First Read suggests McCain [handled the post-collapse immigration questions](#) well in Iowa today--in other words, he sounded like he was admitting likely defeat and pushing it into the closet of Past Lost Causes. But I could be overinterpreting. ...

[More: O'Beirne hears](#) "the Republican leadership continues to press the reluctant Senators" for a deal that could enable cloture. ... 3:13 P.M.

George Borjas on [what the Bush administration could have done](#) to make progress on an [immigration](#) solution. ... [Hint: It's not "comprehensive."] 4:15 A.M.

[Shailagh Murray reports](#) usefully on how four anti-comprehensive Republicans, including Sen. DeMint, switched votes to back the Dorgan anti-guestworker amendment that may have [helped](#) kill the [immigration bill](#). But her story feeds two insidious memes that could propagate in the days ahead:

Bogus Meme #1: The vote-switchers were an obdurate minority frustrating the will of the majority through cynical trickery. Here's Murray:

But that's the Senate, where tactical voting is par for the course, and where a single disgruntled lawmaker -- or, in this case, four -- can run even the most artful compromise aground. [E.A.]

First, Sen. Dorgan, a Democrat, knew full well that if his amendment won it would probably derail the "grand bargain." Republicans [had said](#) that it would. Yet he pressed ahead, aided and abetted by Majority Leader Reid who as the vote was being plotted "tapped Dorgan on the back" and said "excellent," according to Politico's Carrie Budoff. This suggest that Dorgan, and maybe Reid, preferred "no [bill](#)" to the [bill](#) as grandly bargained.

Second, the [bill](#) did not fail after Dorgan's "killer" amendment. It failed on an ordinary cloture vote, in which all parties had been clearly warned by Reid that failure would mean withdrawal of the [bill](#). Yet it couldn't even muster a majority, let alone 60 senators. Why did a bipartisan majority effectively vote to bury the [bill](#)? The Hill's Manu Raju offers an explanation that's [more sophisticated and plausible](#) than Murray's Disgruntled Saboteur theory:

Since the [bill](#) failed on a procedural motion, it gives both parties cover when trying to court the influential Latino vote in the 2008 elections.

That's how the Senate works, no? It excels in providing opportunities for lawmakers to engineer stalemates that kill legislation a majority wants killed while diffusing responsibility for doing so (or allowing reporters to blame "disgruntled" loners). ...

Update: But see [K-Lo's anonymous Senate source](#), who says a) the cloture vote may have reflected majority sentiment less faithfully than I'm claiming; and b) it's not over. (Buried lede!) ...

Bogus Meme #2: Left and Right are totally strange bedfellows here. Sen. DeMint, reports Murray, dislikes the "comprehensive" [bill](#) because it includes "a path to citizenship for undocumented workers." (That's not how DeMint would describe it, probably.) And, says Murray,

Sen. Byron L. Dorgan (D-N.D.) does not like the [immigration bill](#), either, but for entirely different reasons.

Entirely different reasons? Dorgan thinks the [bill](#) would "depress wages and lead to foreigners taking good jobs." And DeMint, presumably, thinks a "path to citizenship" would encourage [more](#) illegal immigrants, who would ... depress wages and lead to foreigners taking good jobs! They're both concerned about depressing wages.



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Bipartisanship! Murray reminds me of those radical feminists who insist that their reasons for censoring pornography are completely different from Pat Robertson's. No they're not.

P.S.: The Post really needs Edsall back. ... 3:11 A.M. [link](#)

Psst The system worked: WaPo's Dan Balz--in a piece produced with stunning swiftness that nevertheless [manages to incorporate every respectable, loaded, portentous goo-goo cliché available](#)--argues that the "collapse of comprehensive **immigration** reform" represents

"a scathing indictment of the political culture of Washington"! ...

"another example of a polarized political system in which the center could not hold"!

"a political system that appears incapable of finding ways to resolve the nation's big challenges." [E.A.]

I prefer the alternative [Boehner Hypothesis](#).

P.S.: Balz's piece is a near-Platonic example of the [Neutral Story Line](#)--a sweeping, seemingly profound and biting analysis that nevertheless doesn't offend anyone because it doesn't seem to be taking sides. But of course it does take sides. It takes the "bipartisan" side--simply assuming that "comprehensive **immigration** reform" is a good idea.

What if the **bill**'s collapse represented

"a rare example of the political system appearing capable of finding ways to reject [half-baked, grandiose schemes of a reckless President](#)"?

Not neutral! ...

P.P.S.: To support his scathing indictment, Balz says "Voters wanted an **immigration** deal ... ." [I know a respected robo-poller who disagrees](#).

P.P.P.S.: The Post really needs Edsall back. ... 2:04 A.M. [link](#)

[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  
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 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. [Romanesko](#) -- 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](#) --

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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 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]

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