

Not Dead Enough!

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Body

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.

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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.]

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-

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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, Lindsay 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](#):

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 suggests 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). ...

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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 ledel!) ...

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. 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](#)

Thursday, June 7, 2007

[Cloture fails, 50-45. Immigration bill pulled off floor by Sen. Reid](#). ... It can't really be about how many amendments Republicans get to offer. ... Alternative: Maybe it's about not being able to take the worst ideas from the left (instant legalization of **illegals**) and the right (second class guest workers), put them together, call it centrism, bask in fawning MSM coverage and ram it down the throat of voters who don't want it! ... P.S.: Sen. Feinstein says the problem is people "never understood the complexities of the bill." I don't think so! ...

Of course, the bill isn't dead. Just resting. There will be an instinctive, goo goo guilt-tripping MSM effort to induce its revival. ('The system isn't working ... bipartisanship,' etc.)** It could well come back. This is **no** time for gloating. ... O.K., maybe a little gloating:

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"Backers of Immigration Bill More Optimistic Lawmakers Cite Sense of Urgency"--[Washington Post, last Monday](#).

As with the LAT's stories about California Gov. Gray Davis' growing confidence heading into his recall election, I don't think this story simply looks embarrassing, given subsequent events. I think it was BS at the time it was written. The Post's reporter was either willingly or (more likely) cluelessly spun by his pro-bill sources, ignoring the impact public opposition to the "grand bargain" over the recess was having.

"Why **Amnesty** Makes Sense"-[Time cover story](#), released today.

Hmm. Maybe editor Rick Stengel wishes he hadn't switched to publishing on Fridays instead of Mondays. Not that the article isn't as timely and provocative as ever!

"I'm ... pessimistic about the chances of blocking the [Senate]immigration bill with so-called Killer Amendments"--[kausfiles, June 5](#) [E.A.]

What do bloggers know? I also thought Dems wouldn't endanger the bill by emasculating the provisions Republicans liked ("Majority Overreach"). But maybe the Dems, too, are [not that unhappy to see the bill fail](#). [How can its failure help both Dems and GOPs? Isn't control of Congress a zero sum game?--ed It is. But incumbents also have an interest in keeping their individual seats--and that's a game both Dem and GOP incumbents and incumbents can win. They win it, in part, by avoiding votes that might anger lopsided [majorities](#) of voters! The conspicuous public opposition to the bill (not just from conservatives) over the past few weeks may have triggered an early onset of this useful self-preservationist instinct.

**--Update: [That was fast](#). ... 6:37 P.M. [link](#)

Hey, Republicans! I know a way to take that divisive issue of the "comprehensive immigration reform" bill off the table.' Kill it! On a muddled procedural vote! Before a weekend! ... See NR's[argument](#). 2:17 P.M.

Politico's Carrie Budoff on [how Dorgan got a "second crack"](#) at his possibly deal-killing amendment. Note especially the suggestive final grafs. ... But Kate O'Beirne [worries that](#)

"the 'fix' is in, with the compromise coalition and the White House fashioning some complicated amendment that will eliminate some conservative improvements, and fix the Dorgan amendment that jeopardizes GOP support."

12:25 P.M.

You can watch a live feed of the Senate voting on cloture for the immigration bill [here](#). ... Update: Here is [AP's latest](#). ... It looks as if there will be [another vote later today](#). ... [Via [RealClearPolitics](#)] 8:54 A.M.

Wednesday, June 6, 2007

Dorgan ex machina? The Senate seems to have just [approved a Dorgan amendment](#) to "sunset" the guest worker program in the immigration bill after five years. Wasn't this same amendment considered a "deal breaker" when it [was rejected](#) a couple of weeks ago? ... I think [it](#) [was](#). ... [Thanks to alert reader N.A.] ... Update: That could explain [Drudge's headline](#). Or not! ... Update 2: AP indeed [fingers the Dorgan amendment](#) as causing trouble:

Sen. Arlen Specter ...said he or his allies would slightly reword Dorgan's amendment and hope for a change of heart by one or more senators who "don't want to kill the bill."

See also this [fresher AP dispatch](#). ...Did WaPo's cheerleaderish Jonathan Weisman go home early? [His posted story](#) still says "Immigrant Measure Survives Challenges." By the time he wakes up, that will probably be accurate again. ... Vote switches: It looks like Bunning, DeMint, Dole, Enzi and Menendez switched to vote for the amendment while Coburn, Grassley and Whitehouse switched against it. Brownback went from not voting to nay, while Dodd went from yea to not voting. ... P.S.: You'd think Sen. Coburn would be a potential insurance vote for

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the amendment. Doesn't he want to kill the bill? Same goes for Sen. Cornyn, who voted against Dorgan both times. ... Alternative outcome: Senate Republicans (e.g. Kyl, McConnell) are so in the tank on this bill they'll decide sunsetting the guest-worker program isn't a deal-breaker after all. ... 10:04 P.M.

[P.O.S.](#) Update: As expected and feared, [the Senate bill "edges back from brink."](#) Sen. Hutchison prepares epic sellout. But Sen. Chambliss says he's only "committed to the concept," not to the bill. ... Much chuckling and repulsive Senate bonhomie. ... See also [LAT](#) and [Novak](#). ... P.S.: Note that Novak says:

[T]he decision to combine border security with naturalization of illegal immigrants has always been the President's way of holding a national priority (security) hostage to a policy (legalization) that he views as desirable.

Doing nothing is an option. A popular option! [According to a Rasmussen poll taken Monday and Tuesday](#), when people are asked to choose between "no bill" and the Senate immigration bill, they prefer "no bill" by a 49-32 margin. ... Support for the bill has fallen further over the past week--it's now opposed by a 2-1 margin, with 53% against it and only 26% supporting it. Maybe it's time for the MSM to stop pretending that it's only the "Republican base" that doesn't like this bill. ...

P.S.: Yesterday, [Senate Majority Leader Reid charged](#), "People are looking for excuses on the Republican side to kill this bill." I'm not sure that's true--and Reid's threat to pull the bill looks to be a negotiating ploy. But if it were true, it would be understandable! Welfare reform faced similar legislative obstacles in 1996. The difference is that voters supported welfare reform by a 2-1 margin. Only a conspiracy of elites could prevent it. This is the inverse situation: only a conspiracy of elites can foist Sen. Kyl's "grand bargain" off on the public. That may be harder to do these days (with, you know, the Web 'n all). ...

Update--It's not just the GOP "base": Gallup finds that [Democrats oppose the bill by almost the same margin as Republicans](#). Independents are the most opposed. ... Gallup adds that most voters still aren't paying enough attention to have a strong opinion. But "there is a core group of about one-third of Americans who are opposed to the bill, counterbalanced by only about one-tenth who support it." As [Mystery Pollster notes](#), there's little reason to assume that if more voters paid attention to the bill it would pick up support. ... To any pol, this is a picture of bill the public doesn't like. ... 10:17 A.M. [link](#)

More Killer Amendment Strategy: Hit Employers Hard! Kf's quondam correspondent, the mysterious Mr. X (as I think I've called him) surfaces with some suggestions that echo the conclusion of the [Killer Amendment Contest](#)--namely that the most lethal immigration-bill amendments will separate the GOP's business conservatives from its social conservatives by targeting employers in a way that also appeals to Democrats:

[I]nstead of working the margins with burdens on employers of Z-visas immigrants, how about hard-nosed provisions that shift the burden of proof about employment eligibility from immigrants to employers... [snip] ... [H]ow about upping the fine for employing illegals to \$100,000 per instance, making it illegal to employ anyone who hasn't been confirmed (instead of the current proposed system of making illegal to fire anyone until their appeals process is up) ... or even, my favorite, a fine that's enforceable on the spot if illegal immigrants are found on a work-site. (Let the employers appeal the fine after they've paid.)

It's not just a poison pill, but I think it's also good policy. ...

If you make it illegal to employ anyone until and only after they've confirmed their employment eligibility, even employers who don't presently have business models dependent on low-wage illegal immigrants (agribusiness, food service, hospitality, etc.) would absolutely freak out because employees wouldn't be able to work while they're appealing mistakes in the system.

But why these make for great killer amendments is because [they] would unite the enforcement-first Republicans with the old-line Labor Dems together on one side against big-business GOP and open-border Dems. That's the fault line of this debate to exploit. Hit employers hard. Very hard.

[E.A.]

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At the very least, tough anti-employer amendments would give labor Dems who'd like to kill the bill--but who might not want to leave many fingerprints--a way to accomplish their goal: they merely vote to make the evil, illegal-hiring employers bear their fair responsibility. It just so happens that this breaks apart the bill's core coalition. ... 2:45 A.M. [link](#)

Hey, President Bush, [here's your domestic legacy!](#) **No** need for that messy, divisive immigration reform business. ... P.S.:Eduwonk is [only mildly impressed](#). He's probably right. Ignore him! Take a victory lap! ... 1:00 A.M.

Tuesday, June 5, 2007

Killer [A's](#): I'm intuitively pessimistic about the chances of blocking the Senate ["p.o.s."](#)--I mean, "grand bargain"--immigration bill with so-called Killer Amendments. But maybe I just don't understand how K.A.'s work. This especially helpful email from reader M.G. on "poison pills" suggests that it's not completely hopeless:

A poison pill is an amendment that the ideological minority uses to defeat a bill that has majority support. They do this by creating an amendment that has the following conditions:1) The vast majority of the ideological majority will reject the whole bill if it includes the amendment.2) A large enough minority of the ideological majority will embrace the amendment, such that when combined with the minority, they form a new majority to pass the amendment.3) The vast majority of the ideological minority favors the amendment either outright, or because they know it will kill the larger bill. An example: the recent move toward D.C. voting representation in the House. The Democratic party supported it more or less down the line. The GOP opposed it. So the GOP introduced an amendment to loosen hand gun restrictions in DC. This resulted in the following:1) The vast majority of Democrats would oppose the overall bill if the amendment passed.2) The amendment would pass, because enough (a dozen?) democrats would be in favor of the hand gun loosening.3) All of the GOP would vote for the amendment, either because they believed in it, or because they wanted to kill the overall bill. The bill died, not because it was voted down, but because the Democratic leadership pulled it from the floor when they saw that the amendment would pass. THAT'S the key: when the leadership sees that a killer amendment is going to turn the majority of the majority against a bill, they won't allow the amendment to happen. Instead, they'll kill the bill. In essence, it requires the majority of the majority to have the following preferences:1) overall bill passes2) **no** bill passes3) overall bill passes with killer amendment

The problem with this "poison the majority" approach, as applied to the immigration bill, is that once the bill gets through the Senate, it will go to the Democratic House and a conference expected to be dominated by Dems--meaning that any changes the Democrats don't like can be taken out. The upshot is that it will be next to impossible to include an amendment that will make lots of Democrats vote against the overall bill now--to value option 2 over option 3 in the above example. They'll just figure any pill that's poisonous to them will disappear in conference.

A successful "killer amendment" would probably have to be one that makes the bill unpalatable to its Republican supporters, who are a minority of the majority. It would peel enough of them away from the bill on a cloture vote to leave it with fewer than 60 supporters. There would seem to be at least two kinds of such amendments.

1. Majority Overreach: In this scenario, the Democrats flex their muscles and amend the bill to their liking in a way that loses them their Republican coalition partners. An example would be the current attempt to retain lots of family reunification visas and dilute or delay the shift to a skills-based system favored by Republicans a) The problem with this approach is the Dems know this and won't want to overreach. b) The ray of light is that some may find it impossible to explain to their constituencies why they voted against family reunification. They may prefer "**no** bill"--and an issue to run on--to having to make that explanation. (That might be why the pro-family-reunification amendments [seem to be giving the bill's sponsors some trouble](#), despite factor (a)); c) The cloud obscuring the ray of light is that many GOP Senators seem [quite willing to sell out](#) even on family unification as long as they can appear to have obtained a compensating concession--e.g. sticking in a [phony "touchback" provision](#) that requires **illegals** to symbolically return to their home countries or even a foreign embassy before taking various steps on the road to citizenship.

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An effective Killer Amendment of this sort would maximize possibility b and minimize possibility c. Perhaps the anti-bill conservatives could render the "touchback" sellout less plausible by teaming with liberals to make the requirements even more of a joke than they are now--which brings us to ...

2, Cynical voting: In this approach, Republicans who didn't like the overall bill would vote for a Democratic amendment, even though they didn't support the amendment, cynically knowing it would poison the bill for many of its Republican supporters. The problem that the cynical Republicans would have to justify their vote. You wouldn't think that would be a big obstacle, but it seems to be. The bill's opponents could have joined the Dems in phasing out the guest worker program, for example--allegedly a killer. But they didn't--not enough of them anyway. [It lost by one vote](#). (If Sen. DeMint had cynically supported Dorgan's amendment, for example, it would have passed.) The trick here would seem to be devising an amendment that Republicans could at least plausibly claim to non-cynically support.

The best of these amendments would play on the division between business-oriented conservatives, who hate regulations and taxes on employers, and social conservatives with less economic concerns. One example might be reader R.M.'s suggestion for an amendment to make employers pay for any English classes that would enable a legalized illegal to get his or her Z-visa. Also: mandated paid hours off to attend those classes! Also: a special tax to pay for border security on any business that employs a Z-visa holder! The more expensive to employers, the better.

That's the most promising tack I've heard. But I doubt it will work either. Pro-business Republicans will figure they can get it taken out in conference, or that they can vote against the bill when it comes back to them. If the bill doesn't pass, I suspect it will simply be because too many senators decide there's too much heat and they'd rather not deal with it. ...

Tell me if I've got all this wrong. ...

Update: Kate O'Beirne's sources [think the bill is still on track](#). ... And be sure you make it to the last paragraphs of [this Politico piece](#). ... 5:30 P.M. [link](#)

I agree with the piece and with the arguments against the piece! [Conor Friedersdorf criticizes](#) my LAT [piece](#) (on the similarities between Bush's Iraq and immigration gambles) for failing to mention that

the Bush Administration sold the Iraq War dishonestly, and now it is selling "comprehensive immigration reform" dishonestly.

Criticism correct. I didn't want readers to think they had to believe that "Bush Lied" about Iraq to be alarmed by his immigration plan. And you don't have to believe that! But it's fun to see staunch conservative Iraq War supporters suddenly realize in retrospect that the [BS media operation](#) Bush is using to sell his immigration project is the same BS media operation he used to sell the war. ...

Ezra Klein, meanwhile, has [this reaction](#):

I'm a little puzzled, though, on why enforcement is so impossible. You can't drop migration to nothing, to be sure, but the utter pessimism as to its reduction strikes me as peculiar. It's also vaguely beside the point. If nothing can be done to lessen illegal immigration, than you just have to decide if you want more of the immigrants to be legal.

I don't think enforcement is impossible. (That's the [WSJ](#)!) What I doubt is that an effective enforcement system--both employer checks and actual physical barriers--can be put in place before the border is hit by a wave of new [illegals](#) attracted by the Bush plan's legalization provisions. That's what I mean when I say the Bush plan requires a "chain of events happening on cue." They won't happen on cue--just as the training of the Iraqi police hasn't happened on cue. Which is why we need to put the enforcement in place, and make sure it works, before we attract a new wave of [illegals](#) by declaring a semi-[amnesty](#).** I should have made this central point more clearly. ...

P.S.: Making the bill's "trigger" real as [some](#) have advocated--i.e., requiring actual reduction in the inflow of [illegals](#), rather than mere deployment of more border cops--won't solve this problem. The way the bill is structured,

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the "trigger" doesn't trigger the legalization. Legalization happens immediately (on a "probationary" basis)--and it's the legalization that will attract the new wave of legalization-seekers. If a "trigger" benchmark is hit two or three years from now, it's two or three years too late (and, indeed, the wave of newcomers will guarantee that an honest benchmark won't be hit). ... In fact, [as Mark Krikorian points out](#), current **illegals** have a perverse interest in having the Z-visa "triggers" take as long as possible. As long as the "Z-visa" program remains un-triggered, they get to stay as "probationary" applicants. Once the triggers click, and the Z-visas start to be issued, the probationary applicants either have to pay up and get the visa or (in theory) leave. ...

**--Whatever you want to call it--and McCain [used to call it "amnesty"](#), back when he was a Straight Talker--the Senate's plan, even with its fines, still means that those who crossed the border illegally are being rewarded for that move. Indeed, they will have hit the jackpot--legal papers to work in America, and eventually become citizens, for a few thousand dollars. Others will try to hit the same jackpot. 12:30 P.M.

Pollster Scott Rasmussen's site seems to be overloaded at the moment, but eventually [this link](#) should take you to a poll showing that only 24% of Arizonans support the Senate immigration bill. 50 % are against it. Under the MSM Inverse Yahoo Courage Formula--in which legislation's presumed merit increases the more actual citizens oppose it while brave statesmen stand up to them--that means it must be a very good bill indeed. ...P.S.: I forgot to say that Arizonans are "on the front lines"! You always have to say Arizonans are on the front lines. ... 12:05 P.M.

Monday, June 4, 2007

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Fleecing of Sen. Kyl, cont.: National Review has [more gruesome details of the Senate's "grand bargain" on immigration](#). It turns out that employers are specifically forbidden from requiring employees to pass the fancy new EEVS 'are-you-really-legal' check before going to work. Employers have to hire "blind" and then try to fire later, if

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they get a "nonconfirmation notice" from the government--after all appeals and "the period to timely file a petition for judicial review" has passed.

It's always harder to fire someone than it is to not hire them in the first place. Plus, it looks to me as if the system gives even new, post-2007 illegal immigrants a free shot to go to work. If there's a backlog in the agency checking the documents, they get to keep working. Then if, months down the road, their documents are rejected, they can just not show up for work one day and fade back into the 'shadows,' to try again later. Do you think the ICE is going to track them down? I don't.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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proclivities, as evidenced in [this 2004 WSJ article](#). Either way, its creepily dictatorial. ... I'm with [Jack](#). ...

Update: There was some discussion of immigration this morning on Fox. The segment I saw--on "Live Desk with Martha MacCallum"--seemed atypically balanced, even comprehensivist. We'll see if the network's bigger guns--e.g., Hannity--are allowed to go after the bill. [Doesn't look like it](#). ... Update 2: Hannity & Colmes had a short-but-satisfying segment in the armpit of the broadcast, wedged between Bob Shrum and Paris Hilton. .. 1:39 A.M.

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

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

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

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

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

Sunday, June 3, 2007

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

Saturday, June 2, 2007

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

Friday, June 1, 2007

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

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

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

Thursday, May 31, 2007

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Doing nothing is not an option."

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

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

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

Bull---t Reminder: Bush and Mehlman say

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

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

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

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

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

11:21 A.M.

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

Why Cougars are needed in Iraq

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

Wednesday, May 30, 2007

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

Tuesday, May 29, 2007

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

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Today, President Bush said his comprehensive immigration plan makes it ["more likely we can enforce our border."](#) Only "more likely"? Why the doubt? After all, the bill specifically [provides for "4 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles"](#) for the Southern border! And illegal immigrants don't get the new Z-visas until those unmanned aerial vehicles are deployed! That's one of the "enforcement benchmarks" Bush boasted about. ... P.S.:OK, actually the **illegals** become legal immediately, [as "probationary" Z-visa applicants](#). But ... hey, the bipartisan authors of the "grand bargain" didn't stop at three unmanned aerial surveillance craft. They have four! Sen. Kyl is one tough negotiator. ...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Monday, May 28, 2007

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Two answers:

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

2) Of course the remaining post-January **illegals** won't be deported, any more than all the current pre-January **illegals** will have to be deported if Congress doesn't pass the "comprehensive" bill. They will live "in the shadows."

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Then, in 10 years, with millions of new illegal shadow-dwellers--way more the Crook's "hundred thousand a year," if things don't go according "to plan" but rather according to recent precedent--there will be responsible bipartisan proposals, which you would be a yahoo to oppose, for another semi-**amnesty**. Potential **illegals** know this, one reason why they will keep coming. (That's the [pattern after amnesties](#), it seems). ...

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

Sunday, May 27, 2007

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

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

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

LINDSAY DRUG SHOCK Stash found after DUI bust

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Someone possessed of far less knowledge than I can see that right now is a crucial time for the immigration debate. If this once-a-generation legislation passes, it will forever alter the face of the United States, for better or worse; it is

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hard to imagine a topic where legislative efforts are less reversible. Furthermore, this is a topic of significant interest to the Fox News demographic, populist conservatives who care a lot about illegal immigration, the national security ramifications of loose border security and the threat posed by complicated, little understood legislation passed without public support or input.

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

12:01 A.M.

Saturday, May 26, 2007

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

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

The Right Against Fox! [Freepers are rumbling.](#) ... 7:43 A.M.

Friday, May 25, 2007

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Not Dead Enough!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Not Dead Enough!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Not Dead Enough!

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

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

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

1:03 A.M.

Thursday, May 24, 2007

This [Hotline observation](#) rings true:

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

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

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

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

Wednesday, May 23, 2007

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

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

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

Not Dead Enough!

Long weekend: Maybe the immigration bill could die in the House (if Pelosi wants it to) or the Senate later this year (if the bill, after it comes back from the House and conference, is too liberal, for example). Maybe not. But's pretty clear that the best-and perhaps only--time to derail immigration semi-**amnesty** is now, before the Senate ever votes on its initial "grand bargain." Risk averse politicians, especially Dems who weren't in the Senate in 2006 to vote on last year's bill, will naturally not want to vote either way on such a charged issue. A pro-legalization vote gives GOPs an issue to run against them on. An anti-legalization vote annoys Latinos and businessmen and maybe party elders.

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

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

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

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

Proponents said wages are already being depressed by illegal immigrants.

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

Alterman [for the border fence!](#)

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

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

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

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

Hmm. So Bush is actively asking his GOP friends to tone down their criticism of the Sen. Kyl's wonderful bipartisan handiwork. Cut to FOX News Channel, which I watched for much of yesterday on a plane--and which wasn't nearly as rabble-rousing on the anti-**amnesty** front as you'd expect a rabble-rousing conservative cable channel to be.

Not Dead Enough!

[Ramesh Ponnuru at The Corner noticed this too](#). Maybe the White House made the same request of Fox it made of Boehner. Certainly this is a crucial weekend for the p.o.s. bill--if Senators go home and get enough grief from their constituents, the alleged 60-70 vote majority might disappear quickly. ... Am I saying that Roger Ailes, head of Fox News, is susceptible to guidance from the White House? Yes! Conservatives shouldn't trust Fox any more than liberals do. ... Update 5/23: Tonight Hannity & Colmes opened with ... the catfight at The View! I rest my case. ...1:01 P.M. [link](#)

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

Monday, May 21, 2007

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

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

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

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

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

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

6:46 P.M.

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

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

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

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

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

Not Dead Enough!

The folks I talked to believe this is the year. [Two years from now isn't an option](#). The particular political circumstances we're in are nearly unique: Bush has nothing left to lose but his involvement still provides cover for Republicans, Democrats can get an immigration bill without full ownership over it, the space is open for the subject because the President won't allow action on other liberal priorities and the Congress won't countenance any conservative agenda items, and so on. You have the [RNC defending a bill](#) that, were it offered under a Democratic president, they'd be tearing apart. Meanwhile, this just won't be a priority for the next president: President Democrat will want to do health care, not amnesty, and President Republican will want to get reelected someday. So this is the shot. [E.A.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sunday, May 20, 2007

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

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

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

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

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

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

Not Dead Enough!

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

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

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

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

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

Saturday, May 19, 2007

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Using advanced, high-tech tools, Karl Rove has found the last pocket of support for Bush and destroyed it with laser-like efficiency. ... Update: See David Frum for eight (8) reasons why the immigration deal ["detonated the slow](#)

Not Dead Enough!

[motion trigger on a Republican debacle in 2008.](#) "Powerline [agrees](#), with one exception (it helps Romney). ... 1:25 P.M.

Don't Calm Down! On the [PBS NewsHour](#), David Brooks says the 70 Senate votes for the Kyl-Kennedy immigration "compromise" are "soft." Great. But opposition is soft too. For example, the National Review notes that Alabama [Sen. Jeff Sessions put out a statement saying he is "deeply concerned with the compromise" bill](#) and wants to look at the "details." Sessions shouldn't be "deeply concerned" with the compromise. He should be opposing the compromise. He knows enough now without looking at the "details." ... If Sessions (who eviscerated last year's "comprehensive" bill) doesn't take the lead in the Senate, who will? ... P.S.: "Soft" senators react to the public's reaction. This is so not the time for opponents to calm down. ... 2:37 A.M. [link](#)

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

Friday, May 18, 2007

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

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

Spiegelman Scores! If Rupert Murdoch [has a shot](#) at wresting the Wall Street Journal from the Bancroft family--despite a two-tier stock structure designed to give the family a majority of the voting rights--why can't somebody else wrest the New York Times from the Sulzberger family (protected by a similar two tier structure). [Bloggingheads asks](#); Roger Lowenstein, [criticizing both papers' two-tier structure in the New Republic](#), doesn't answer. ...

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

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

Don't Count on Pelosi: Opponents of the [GOP cave-in on immigration](#) would be fools, I think, to rely on Nancy Pelosi's House to kill the legislation. Pelosi has allegedly demanded that the White House produce 70 Republican "yes" votes as bipartisan cover before she brings the bill to the floor. (In [today's NYT](#), Rahm Emanuel says

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"60 or 70.") What are the bill's opponents going to do when Pelosi decides that, hey, 20 or 30 Republican votes are enough? [Hugh Hewitt's instinct](#)--to try to stall the bill now, in the Senate--seems sound. ... P.S.: If I were a paranoid, which I am, I'd even think that Pelosi's heavily-publicized riff about needing 70 GOP votes in her chamber is a trick to sucker Republican senators into supporting the bill with the (false) hope that the 70 votes won't be there and it will be blocked in the House. ... 1:45 P.M. [link](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thursday, May 17, 2007

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

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

P.P. S.: A Full FAP strategy might require conservatives to figure out how to rile up, not just right wing anti-amnesty critics of the bill but also left wing immigrant-rights critics. Perhaps House Democrats could be subtly encouraged to hold a large hearing, attended by activists from the undocumented community, at which spokespeople loudly demanded not just instant legalization but free instant legalization! (Speaker suggestion: Nativo Lopez.) They'll be making these demands soon enough. Why not now? ... They might also emphasize that they do not think they are immigrants at all--this is their homeland! We stole it from them. ... Not only would these hearings mobilize Latino opposition to the compromise, they might also turn off the rest of the country (much as some famous hearings featuring George Wiley's welfare rights activists soured the country on the guaranteed income). ...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This latest bill will do the same.

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

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

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

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

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

Wednesday, May 16, 2007

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

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

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

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

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Tuesday, May 15, 2007

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[link](#)

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

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

Lose: Paul, Tancredo, Gilmore

Not Much Impact: Hunter, Thompson, Brownback

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Today is supposed to be crunch day for the Senate compromise immigration bill being negotiated. [Mark Krikorian has an update](#): "[I]f Jon Kyl makes a deal with Ted Kennedy, then **amnesty** will pass the Senate; if not, not." ... Meanwhile, "comprehensive" supporter Tamar Jacoby [celebrates the spirit of bipartisan compromise](#) by calling 25% of the [Republican] party "these yahoos." ... How come she gets to hurl the epithets? [At least she didn't call them "wusses."--ed. Then we'd have to wait for a ruling from Sullivan.] ..

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

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

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

Chrysler: Three unsubtle points--

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

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

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

[Bloggingheads](#) --Bob Wright's videoblog project. [Gearbox](#) --Searching for the Semi-Orgasmic Lock-in.
[Drudge Report](#) --80 % true. Close enough! [Instapundit](#) --All-powerful hit king. [Joshua Marshall](#) -
 -He reports! And decides! [Wonkette](#) --Makes Jack Shafer feel guilty. [Salon](#) -- Survives! kf
 gloating on hold. [Andrew Sullivan](#) --He asks, he tells. He sells! [David Corn](#) --Trustworthy reporting
 from the left. [Washington Monthly](#) --Includes Charlie Peters' proto-blog. [Lucianne.com](#) --Stirs the
 drink. [Virginia Postrel](#) -- Friend of the future! [Peggy Noonan](#) -- Gold in every column. [Matt
 Miller](#) --Savvy rad-centrism. [WaPo](#) --Waking from post-Bradlee snooze. [Keller's Calmer Times](#) --
 Registration required. [NY Observer](#) --Read it before the good writers are all hired away. [New
 Republic](#) --Left on welfare, right on warfare! [Jim Pinkerton](#) -- Quality ideas come from quantity ideas.

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[Tom Tomorrow](#) --Everyone's favorite leftish cartoonists' blog. [Ann "Too Far" Coulter](#) --Sometimes it's just far enough. [Bull Moose](#) -- National Greatness Central. [John Ellis](#) --Forget that Florida business! The cuz knows politics, and he has, ah, sources. ["The Note"](#) --How the pros start their day. [Romenesko](#) -- O.K. they actually start it here. [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#) --Money Liberal Central. [Steve Chapman](#) --Ornery-but-lovable libertarian. [Rich Galen](#) --Sophisticated GOP insider. [Man Without Qualities](#) --Seems to know a lot about white collar crime. Hmm. [Overlawyered.com](#) --Daily horror stories. [Eugene Volokh](#) --Smart, packin' prof, and not Instapundit! [Eve Tushnet](#) --Queer, Catholic, conservative and not Andrew Sullivan! [WSJ's Best of the Web](#) --James Taranto's excellent obsessions. [Walter Shapiro](#) --Politics and (don't laugh) neoliberal humor! [Eric Alterman](#) --Born to blog. [Joe Conason](#) --Bush-bashing, free most days. [Lloyd Grove](#) --Don't let him write about you. [Arianna's Huffosphere](#) --Now a whole fleet of hybrid vehicles. [TomPaine.com](#) -- Web-lib populists. [Take on the News](#) --TomPaine's blog. [B-Log](#) --Blog of spirituality! [Hit & Run](#) --Reason gone wild! [Daniel Weintraub](#) --Beeblogger and Davis Recall Central. [Eduwonk](#) -- You'll never have to read another mind-numbing education story again. [Nonzero](#) -- Bob Wright explains it 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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