I yield back to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I would ask the gentleman from Connecticut whether he is proposing any specific initiative to formally request that the Iraq Study Group reconvene and make an assessment in Iraq in the near future. If he is, I would be pleased to join with him on a bipartisan basis.

Mr. SHAYS. To guarantee it would actually come to the floor of the House, maybe we could put your name first and mine second. But I would love to work with you on that.

Mr. ISRAEL. I would welcome that partnership.

I am going to yield to my friend from New York, Mr. BISHOP.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. I just want to make two points. One, on the question of engaging Iran and others that we see as enemies or adversaries, you are quite right, Mr. DENT, that there is no guarantee of success if we do engage, but we can virtually guarantee no success if we don't engage. So it just seems to me that engagement is absolutely crucial.

I think I am quoting former Secretary of State Baker correctly when I quote him as saying that engaging in dialogue with our enemies is not appeasement. It is diplomacy and negotiation and dialogue, something I think we have had too little of. Hopefully we are moving in that direction now, and signs recently are that we are.

The second point I would make is that Iran has an awful lot at stake here. If, in fact, as a great many fear, Iraq becomes a haven for al Qaeda, I cannot imagine that Iran views an al Qaeda-Sunni dominated state on their borders as something that is in their best interests. So I think that they clearly do have in effect common interests with us in terms of bringing some order, some stability, to Iraq.

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. If my colleagues have any final comments, I would be happy to recognize them, and then I am prepared to close.

The gentleman from Maryland, Mr. GILCHREST.

Mr. GILCHREST. I thank the gentleman.

Just very quickly on the comment from the gentleman from New York, Syria is basically a secular country. It is not an Islamic state. It is secular. They feared al Qaeda and the Taliban, and they don't want al Qaeda in Iraq creating chaos. Al Qaeda was basically the enemy of the Iranians. It was the enemy of Iraq. It was a disruptive factor in the Middle East.

So careful analysis of each country, using the best diplomats in the world that the United States has, has the potential for unraveling this very difficult, chaotic situation. We know we need a military presence in the Middle East, we know we need a political presence in the Middle East, and we know we need an economic presence in the Middle East. With the emphasis on the politics and the economics with the Middle Eastern countries, I think we can back our way out of this chaos.

Mr. SHAYS. I would just like to thank you again for getting us together. This has really been a pleasure. I just admire all of you here tonight, and thank you for including me.

Mr. ISRAEL. I thank the gentleman. The gentleman from Pennsylvania?

Mr. DENT. I too want to commend the gentleman from New York for organizing this event tonight, this special order. We need to see a little bit more of this type of activity in this Congress, and I hope the American people who are watching this exercise tonight maybe find this a little bit different or maybe a little bit more refreshing than what they are accustomed to during special orders. I just want to thank you for putting this together.

One final point. I think Mr. GILCHREST made the point about interaction with Syria on a commercial basis in this country. A constituent called just the other day who imports various food products from Syria, because I have a large Middle Eastern community in my district. And just some of the challenges, they just want to go about life as they normally would.

I thought it was interesting. It kind of brings back home the point that people want to coexist peacefully. That the challenges and the stakes are very high in Iraq, and I think all of us want to make sure that whatever policy is pursued, particularly after September, it is one that is responsible and one that will make us all safer and hopefully the region more stable.

So, again, thank you, Mr. ISRAEL, for putting this on. It is much appreciated.

Mr. ISRAEL. I thank the gentleman.

I will close by thanking each of our colleagues to join with us this evening. Of the American people are accustomed to tuning into these so-called special orders and seeing a Democratic hour, which is usually spent beating up Republicans, and a Republican hour, which is usually spent beating up Democrats.

Tonight they saw something different. They saw Mr. DENT talk about a status of forces agreement, which Democrats can agree with. They saw Mr. BISHOP talk about the one-for-one agreement, which has bipartisan support. They saw Mr. SHAYS discuss an idea to have the Iraq Study Group reassess conditions, which has Democratic support. And they heard the historic perspective of Mr. GILCHREST, a perspective that only a Marine that was wounded in Vietnam can properly give to the United States Congress.

The point is that I believe that without sounding overly enthusiastic, that in the past hour there was more bipartisan, reasoned, rational discussion of ideas to move us forward rather than left or right than has happened on the floor of this House over the past 4 years. That is precisely what the Center Aisle Caucus was created to generate.

Tonight we close by sharing our principles: That we support our Armed Forces. We will take care of our veterans. More assistance passed in today's appropriations bill to veterans than at any time in the 77-year history of the Veterans Administration, passed unanimously by the Appropriations Committee today. We will secure Iraq's border. We want to stand up Iraq's security forces. We understand the need for regional change. We will push for that. We understand the threat of Iran. And we want to defeat al Qaeda.

Today's discussion was not about left or right, it was about moving forward. I know the gentleman talked about the servicemember that he represents who was lost in Iraq. Again, I would ask the American people to continue to support our Armed Forces.

I can think of no better evening and no better person to inspire this special order than Matthew Baylis, who we lost in Iraq last week, and I believe he would be very proud of what we are doing this evening. As I said before, I don't know whether he was a Democrat or a Republican. I have no idea whether his family are Republicans or Democrats. I do know that they would be proud that this evening, Democrats and Republicans joined together to talk about a way forward, without a single one of us calling another one a name.

IMMIGRATION ISSUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I have defended President Bush throughout most of his administration: From the war in Iraq; to those tragic mistakes that were made at Abu Ghraib, realizing they were just mistakes, but not at the heart of the policy; from the tax cuts to the preparation of the prescription drug bill.

I feel that I have been a loyal soldier to this administration, to the President, and, yes, to the country, especially on the country's war on terror. I have been four-square behind the President's successful efforts in that war and some of these efforts that we have been talking about today that are straining the public morale.

I have been very supportive of the President's tax efforts, fundamental economic efforts in the tax area to keep our economy humming.

So after all of this support, last week it was personally offensive to me to hear that I and millions of people like me were being described by the President as not wanting to do what is right for America because we refused to support the Kennedy-Bush immigration bill currently being examined and going through the Senate.

The President also suggested that those of us who oppose the type of legalization of status and those of us who

are opposed to the type of legislation that we believe will promote more illegal immigration into our country, that we are just trying to frighten people by using the word ''amnesty.''

The President, of course, insists on defining amnesty in a way that is independent and contrary to the way everyone else defines that word, and every time he does that, he loses credibility. Every time he follows his inclination to try to obfuscate this issue of illegal immigration, rather than to deal with it and to debate it four-square, he loses credibility.

The President also suggests if we know the details of the bill, the legislation, I call it, the Bush-Kennedy legislation, that we will support it. Well, the more we find out about that legislation going through the Senate, the more vigorously we should oppose that bill.

There are literally hundreds of loopholes in that legislation. I believe the very basis of the legislation is flawed in its intent. The fact there are so many terrible aspects of this bill, one has to suggest that the bill's intent was not the right intent to begin with. It was not a bill aimed at stemming illegal immigration, but instead this bill has some other intent, obviously.

The American people, however, can decide for themselves. The President says we need to get to know what is in the bill. Well, let's take a look at what is in the bill.

Problem number one: This legislation is an amnesty bill. I am sorry if that doesn't go by the definition that is handed down by the White House, which obviously has the ability to define or redefine words, but it is an amnesty bill. This bill grants immediate legal status to illegal aliens, and that legal status happens immediately, before any of the enhancements. They will have what they call ''enforcement enhancements'' in the bill that will help us ''enforce our immigration laws.''

□ 2115

But before any of those enhancements are activated, and they are called the triggers, before they are activated, every person who is here illegally will be able to be granted legal status, a temporary visa. It is called a Z visa.

So 24 hours after an illegal immigrant files an application, they will be granted a probationary visa, the so-called Z visa. It will be issued, and with that legal status, that visa, comes the right to live and work in the United States: Immediate legalization for everyone who is here.

The President tries to suggests it is not amnesty because we are not granting citizenship. And then a big cloud of smoke comes up for people to try to understand what's going on here.

Amnesty doesn't mean granting citizenship; amnesty means somebody is doing something illegal and you have now made it legal. All of them get this amnesty, this legalization, within 24 hours of applying the minute this legislation passes. That is whether or not the triggers, the enforcement mechanisms that are also in the bill, if they are never activated, these so-called probationary visas will never expire. They will continue on. Every 8 years or so they will have to be reapplied for, but they can be reapplied for and granted further extensions forever.

And the Social Security cards which come with that can be issued. These people when they have Z visas, these probationary visas, they are now eligible for all of our government programs with the Social Security cards and all of the other things that people who are here legally, people who immigrated to this country legally, people who waited for years to come here, who obeyed our rules, these other people are going to get it immediately.

Of course, U.S. citizens, what does U.S. citizenship get? The only difference is a right to vote. So how is this not amnesty? Obviously it is.

Word games aside, the Senate bill not only grants amnesty, but it also provides things that will do great damage other than just the amnesty to our country.

The much-touted fines of this bill, and there are fines that are required, and we have heard this, another cloud of smoke comes in during that discussion on this bill. We hear this idea there is going to be a $5,000 fine for those people who want to be serviced by this legislation. No, that $5,000 fine is not required before someone gets a legal status. That is what happens before someone becomes a citizen. This legislation that is passing through the Senate does not require $5,000 to legalize status. You cannot buy a used car in this country for $1,000; but $1,000 will give you the right to live in the United States and obtain government benefits, including Social Security, that goes with that legalization.

The Z visa fine, which is a requirement, it is just a payoff, that $1,000, is not the $5,000 that everybody hears about. It is about $1,000. Unfortunately, ignorant and lazy mainstream media people have been using the $5,000 figure, and even that I think would be a very questionable thing to give all of these benefits and rights to people here illegally for $5,000. No, we are going to give it to them for $1,000. And by the way, it can be paid on the installment plan. You can buy the right to live, work and receive benefits in the United States of America for $1,000. And it can be renewed every few years, it can be renewed every few years forever.

If a government official misuses information, according to this legislation, if there is information on an illegal amnesty application, and that information is misused by a government employee, there is a $10,000 fine for that government employee who would misuse information on an illegal immigrant's amnesty application.

So breaking into our country, entering the United States illegally, using false documents, which almost all of them have, identity theft to hold a job, and they are holding of course jobs that they are not entitled to have in the first place, this is somehow less onerous, we are only going to charge them $1,000 to legalize their entire status, but we are charging $10,000 for a paperwork mistake by a government official who might misuse the information or get it wrong on the application.

It should be noted that the amnesty of the Senate bill treats illegal immigrants better than they treat legal immigrants into the United States. Illegal aliens who snuck into the United States 5 months ago are given immediate legal status while legal immigrants who applied to come to the United States after May 1, 2005, must start the application process all over again.

Now these are people who have been waiting overseas. They applied after May 2005. They are overseas waiting. Those people who are not the law breakers, they must start the process over again.

So the illegals can cut in line, go around everybody around the world where there are millions and millions of people who are waiting to come here legally, who respect our laws, those people who cut in line in front of those who would be U.S. citizens and come here legally are the ones given the benefit. Those waiting in line have to, in fact, go to the end of the line, in some cases, according to this legislation, while the others scoot ahead.

This, of course, is a serious blow to those waiting in line who would like to come here legally, and that has not escaped the notice of the foreign press. People overseas are taking very close note of this. The foreign press is making it very clear what this legislation is doing to people who respect the laws of the United States.

This legislation is now being touted overseas by people suggesting that anyone who stands in line and waits and respects our laws is a fool. And, of course, we are making them fools by rewarding those who don't obey the rules and punishing those who do.

By the way, in the Senate bill a note from a friend, a note, a letter from a friend, is considered evidence that one has lived in the United States before. When an illegal alien applies to live in the United States, if this legislation passes, he can literally provide a sworn declaration from someone, as long as it is not a relative, as proof that he lived in the United States and now is eligible for this legalization of his status.

Is there anyone outside the White House who does not understand that this will cause a massive influx of new illegal immigrants into our country? Because if they want to get legal status, all they have to do is find someone to write a letter for them, and as far as they are concerned, that is a get-into-America-free card that one of their friends will write for them. Does anyone think that we are not going to

have a massive flow of people? That all of the people waiting in line will not hear about this? And what about all of the people not waiting in line hearing about this?

Between 12 and 15 million people are expected to apply for amnesty if the legislation now going through the Senate passes. Now how can the Department of Homeland Security possibly verify the letters that are going to be presented by people to prove that they have immigrated to this country or lived in this country for a given period of time; and thus, then they have legal status if they have lived here. Even if it is illegally being here, they still will be legalized if they have a note from their friend. Does anyone not understand the jeopardy that this rule puts us in in America? Yet it is in the bill. I mean, it is bizarre but it is in the bill. Who wrote this bill? Whoever did let this provision be in the bill.

And as for the much-publicized background checks that amnesty seekers are supposed to have, the background checks are going to happen on those people applying for citizenship. The background checks are going to happen after legal status has already been granted as a temporary status, a legal status that can be again renewed. Background checks are not required before the probationary visas are issued.

And yes, you heard it correctly, legal status must be granted to an illegal alien within 24 hours of that illegal alien making application. Even if the alien has not passed all of the appropriate background checks, within 24 hours, the Department of Homeland Security has to grant him legal status, a ''probationary visa'' which can go on forever. Can you imagine the criminals, the carriers of communicable diseases, the dregs of other societies, who will obtain a legal right to live and work in the United States because of this loophole?

How about the gang who flew planes into the World Trade Center? How about the terrorists, would they have been granted legal status immediately by this bill? Many of them of course were here illegally. They had overstayed their visas. The answer is yes, they would have made legal status almost immediately. It is insanity.

And a final burst of insanity, illegals who have been ordered deported by a United States court already, and the court has ordered them to be deported because they are not here legally, those people already under court order to be deported, will be eligible for this amnesty, for this legalization of their status.

Now listen to this carefully. Illegals who have been through the courts and are under court order to leave the United States, can apply for amnesty. Almost 636,000 aliens are in this country in defiance of a court order to leave. All of them can now apply to stay here under this bill. They will be given a temporary visa, a ''probationary visa,'' that can be renewed.

Talk about teaching a disrespect for law. Does a court order mean nothing? How can we simply allow people who have openly defied our laws; and, yes, also defied a court order from a judge in the United States of America, how can we simply ignore that? That is what the Senate legislation would have us do. That is the Bush-Kennedy legislation making its way through the Senate.

Problem number two with the bill, the enforcement triggers in the bill are actually weaker than the current law. What is a trigger? What we have are the enforcement mechanisms that are in this bill that are supposed to be activated. They will supposedly help us enforce the laws, like fences and more beds in detention centers and stronger border patrol.

The provisions of this bill, these triggers, these enforcement mechanisms, are actually weaker than current law. This bill does not require, for example, one more detention center bed. It does not require one more mile of fence. It does not require one more agent than is currently required by law. In fact, the bill cuts the fencing requirements in half so the bill actually, when they talk about to get the fence, we have to have this bill, although there is already legislation requiring the fence, this bill requires actually one-half the fencing that is already required by law.

It requires 11,500 fewer detention spaces and fewer border patrol agents than the Congress has already authorized in other legislation. So we are supposed to support the legalization of status for illegals in order to get the trigger mechanisms to work, in order to get the enhancement of enforcement when this bill weakens the enforcement that is already in place.

□ 2130

To think you can weaken an enforcement provision and then pretend that legislation somehow strengthens border enforcement is an insult to the American people.

Wake up, America. Our country is being stolen from us. Our country is being invaded, and the Senate legislation will accelerate this invasion.

And it is not just Mexican Americans who are crossing the border, nor South Americans and others who are crossing the border from Mexico. We also, of course, have a huge problem with illegal immigration of people who are coming into our country and overstaying their visas. They're just as much a part of the illegal immigration problem as those people crossing our Canadian and our Mexican border. Yet this bill does nothing, absolutely nothing, to strengthen the system to try to reform the U.S. visa system. They call it the U.S. visit exit system which, right now, when someone comes into our country with a visa, we don't know if they have left.

It was mandated back in 1996 that that system would be fixed and that we would track visitors to our country so we would know if they had come and if they'd gone home, and so then we would know at least who is here illegally. That hasn't even been fixed by this legislation. Of course, not knowing who is left or who stays in the United States, it makes it impossible for us to track who has overstayed their visa.

May I remind you that somewhere between a third and half of our illegal alien population, that's between 4 and 5 million people, are people who are here who have overstayed their visas. So I think it's misportrayed when we only look to our southern border, and too many people, too many people talk about this as something to do with Mexico. Well, it has something to do with Mexico, because a large number of illegals are from Mexico, but this problem is way beyond that, and there are many, many other illegals in this country, from Asia and elsewhere, that need to be brought to justice and to be returned to their country.

Now why is this such an important component of this bill? Because it's already been mandated by Congress, and what is important, in actually looking at the legislation going through the Senate, is that legislation doesn't even touch on this provision of trying to get control of this huge wedge into our system, this road on which people are invading like bacteria into our country.

The Bush-Kennedy legislation in the Senate, of course, does not touch on it, because that legislation is not aimed at stemming the flow of illegals into our country. It is, indeed, pro-invasion legislation.

Problem number three, a great many criminals are eligible for amnesty under the bill going through the Senate. Again, this is a simple statement of fact, and this is very bizarre.

Under the bill going through the Senate, some child molesters are eligible for legal status. I'm not making this up. A child molester in this legislation, a child molester who committed his crime before the bill was enacted, is not barred from amnesty if their conviction omitted the age of their victim. This is a bizarre loophole.

Who wrote this bill? Who included that in this bill? This is a nutty provision. The people who put that provision in the bill are working with those people who wrote the legislation.

Also, we have gang members who are eligible for amnesty. As long as a gang member signs a piece of paper renouncing their gang membership, they can apply for the probationary status and must be granted it within 24 hours. Now, I'm certain that signing a piece of paper will mean that the gang members will change their drug dealing and violent ways and become positive members of our society.

This bill will cost American taxpayers billions and billions, yes, trillions of dollars. Just one example. The earned income tax credit which now provides help for financially low-income Americans, we actually are providing them through this tax credit

some stipend, some money, it is currently done at a cost of $20 billion. It's a $20 billion expenditure that we're trying to help out low-income Americans.

Illegal aliens on Z visas and guest workers will be eligible to apply for the earned income tax credit immediately. They are now legally in this country, so they can have that income tax credit. The Congressional Budget Office says this will cost $20 billion more of our money.

Now the 1996 welfare reform bill demanded that persons be a legal resident of the United States for 5 years before they can receive any benefits that are eligible to people in the United States. Why are we granting illegal aliens and guest workers benefits that we do not give to legal aliens? How can this possibly be right that we treat illegal aliens better than law-abiding immigrants, much less treating them better than the poor people who are waiting in line, trying to emigrate to this country legally, who respect us and want to become U.S. citizens the right way?

Well, also in the Senate legislation is, of course, the old issue of State tuition and loans. Yes, in this legislation, State tuition and loans will be granted to illegal immigrants once they get their probationary visa. That means anybody who's come here illegally will automatically be eligible for all these educational benefits that our children are eligible for.

Actually, it's worse. Our children can't get in-State tuition. If we're 100 miles away over your State's border, we can't go to the other State and go in that facility, but someone who has snuck into this country from thousands of miles away or from the other side of the world can get a tuition break, and it is paid for by us, the taxpayers. They get in-State tuition, even though they come from a far-off country and have come here illegally, while if we try to go to another State we have to pay higher rates.

Now the legislation does ban some illegal aliens from being able to collect Social Security, and that's true. But we know that the President of the United States, for example, has actually already made an agreement with Mexico, although it was a secret agreement in order to provide what they call a totalization agreement, which will permit illegals from Mexico who have been working in the United States to obtain Social Security benefits for the work that they did here illegally, but that's just for the people from Mexico.

Now this bill says that others outside of the totalization agreement won't get Social Security benefits for the work they did while they were here illegally, but there's a big loophole in the bill. Any illegal who overstayed a visa but was issued a Social Security number will be allowed to obtain credit for the work they did illegally.

In other words, if someone was here illegally, overstayed a visa, while they were here on the visa, if they got their Social Security number, they will then be permitted to get credit for what they did when they were working here illegally because they then had their Social Security card.

We know that between, as I said, 4 and 5 million illegal aliens are people who entered here on a visa and then did not go home. This loophole would allow these millions of people who broke the law to work in this country to collect Social Security. At the very time when we are rightfully worried about the future solvency of Social Security, we will allow those who violated their visas to obtain the fruit of their illegal labors. They will be permitted to have Social Security. This is an incredible injustice to our seniors who depend on that system and should not worry about what amounts to basically this theft of Social Security benefits.

Now, let us note that there are many people trying to suggest that illegal immigrants actually help Social Security. People actually said this here in Washington.

Well, let's note this. More than half of the illegal immigrants in our country work for cash under the table. Now, of those people who are working for cash, are they helping our Social Security system? We're being told that illegals working here help our Social Security system. So these illegal immigrants, because they're being paid under the table, half of them are paid under the table, they do not pay into the Social Security system. And since they are paid cash, the employers do not pay. Not only does the worker not pay his contributions to the Social Security system, but the employer isn't paying his portion into the Social Security system.

So a negative effect is this job, if you look at it even beyond that, is that this job is a job that could be filled by an American citizen or a legal immigrant, but now that job's been taken by an illegal who is not doing anything to pay into the Social Security system. The legal immigrant or the American citizen, whose job that would be if that person wasn't there, would be paying into the system.

So Americans are losing jobs to illegals who aren't paying their fair share into the Social Security system. How does that help the Social Security system?

Corresponding to this, a flow of illegal labor into our country brings down wages in general. So employers might have paid $10 to $12 an hour, they're now paying much lower wages which then results, of course, in lower contributions to the Social Security system.

Don't tell me that illegal immigration or that huge amounts of immigration to our country will help the Social Security system. It's a grave threat to the Social Security system.

Of course, there are those who say, well, actually the way to make this right is to legalize all those immigrants who are here illegally and then they will be paying Social Security. Well, let me note this. Legalizing the status of those who are here illegally will make the Social Security challenge we now face dramatically worse in the future than it is now. Any plan that specifically gives Social Security to those who have been working in this country is an invitation to fraud on a massive scale.

What would stop anyone from claiming that they worked here under a false Social Security number? Hundreds of thousands of people pay into Social Security under various numbers. Hundreds of thousands, millions work here under false Social Security numbers. So how can you prove who used those fraudulent numbers? Who were they? You can't prove who they were. If they make that claim, how are we going to prove that that's not them?

We already have a huge problem with identity theft and fraudulent identification. Allowing those who work here illegally, who have worked here illegally to participate in Social Security, exponentially increases the incentive for fraud. Because now they were using false papers to begin with, now they will claim that they were here and they could claim they worked for any number of people, even if they didn't.

Another overlooked consequence is the survivor's benefits and disability benefits of the Social Security system. What would stop anyone from claiming my spouse worked in the United States under this false number, I am his widow, these are his children, please start sending me survivor's benefits now that we are entitled to them? Remember, billions of people around the world have no retirement whatsoever. Why assume that only younger immigrants will come to the United States? Why wouldn't someone in their 50s think, gee, if I come to the United States and work for a few years, maybe 10 years, the Social Security that I will get will let me live very well at home; I'll get it sent to me at home. Why wouldn't they think that?

If you had no retirement benefits and you knew that we were legalizing the status of millions upon millions of people who have come here, why wouldn't you do anything, including commit fraud, which they already do to get jobs anyway with their fraudulent documents, why wouldn't they do anything to get their hands on that Social Security? The bill going through the Senate would facilitate that.

Furthermore, many people who would be legalized under the several different proposals that are going around, including these ones that we are hearing in the Senate, the people that are coming here already and will come here under the system because it will attract many more illegals, these are mainly poor and unskilled workers.

The fact is over half the illegal immigrants in this country do not have a high school education. The inconvenient fact is that Social Security pays out more benefits proportionately to lower-wage workers than to higher-wage workers.

A projection I've seen from Social Security assumes that immigrants have the same general earning potential as native-born Americans. Well, that's obviously not true.

So to bring in people with low education or little education, what we're going to do in the long run is place the burden of about $100,000 per person in the long term on our Social Security system because they will collect that much more than they put in, especially if they come here when they are in their 50s, in the late 40s or 50s. In the long run, this will be a catastrophe for the Social Security system.

And last and foremost in terms of Social Security, in 1986, after being told that it would only legalize about 1 million people, 3 million people were actually legalized. Three million illegal immigrants ended up being given amnesty. That's back in 1986.

□ 2145

It is now 20 years later. The current illegal immigrant estimate ranges from 12 to 20 million people. I keep hearing the lowball, 11 million. Let me note the 20 million figure that I just suggested, that we have up to 20 to 25 million illegals in this country, this didn't come from a government source, it was from a private study that was conducted on the monies that were sent back as remittances to other countries.

They studied that and figured out how many people it would take to supply those kinds of remittances, and they came up with about 20 million people could be here illegally. Well, what's going to happen when those people are legalized? Last time, 1 million people became 3 million, and now we have maybe 15 to 20 million. Well, if we legalize those people who are already here, and then we permit them into the Social Security system, this will turbocharge the flood of illegals into our country.

So, what does that mean? We are going to end up, not with the 20 million that we had, 3 million before, and it became 12 to 20 million, now, with 20 million, 12 to 20 million, we could expect that by legalizing their status we will have between 45 and 60 million illegals here by 2027.

Wake up, America, 45 to 60 million people from other countries pouring into the United States? What is that going to do to our society? No fence, no wall, no minefield, no system will keep illegal immigratios out of this country. If we give them a reasonable hope that generous government benefits, including retirement benefits like Social Security can be theirs, if they can just get across the border and wait us out. Because that's exactly what we are doing right now. If we pass this bill that's going through the Senate, we are telling the people throughout the world that they will be able, if they wait us out and get here, they can expect to get pension benefits, health benefits, education benefits, beyond their imagination.

Who would not come, when they come, by the tens of millions, oh, much to the surprise of the people who were passing this legislation. After all, Senator KENNEDY didn't predict this massive jump that we have now when they passed the bill in 1986. Well, what's going to happen when they get here? The Social Security system will collapse, as will most of our government infrastructure.

Listen, being irrationally benevolent to illegals is a crime against our own people. The bill that's going through the Senate would bring about such a calamity in the United States of America. It would be a calamity for average Americans. Illegal immigrants are not, despite what you have heard, required to even pay back taxes in the legislation going through the Senate. The bill originally did not require any back taxes to be paid however.

However, there was an amendment to the bill, I understand, that was passed, asking that illegals pay back taxes. All right, we are going to treat our illegals better than we treat our own people, because that provision in the bill is weak. It only requires that illegal immigrants show proof that they have paid taxes for 1 year under subparagraph DI, that's according to the bill.

Unfortunately, the bill was written in such haste that there is no subparagraph DI in the legislation. So there are certain to be court cases arguing whether or not the provision that requires a certain amount of back taxes to be paid, whether or not that is a legal requirement or not. Because there is no section DI in the bill.

Remember, you do not have to show that you worked in the past in order to obtain a legal status. So the actual effect of the full amendment on taxes will be that you will have to show that you will pay taxes in the future if you come, and, frankly, how do I become an illegal immigrant with this type of lax attitude towards taxation? I would love not to have to pay my taxes if I had back taxes that I owed.

If people are paid under the table for years, we are just going to give them, issue them a waiver. You have paid up, made all this money in the United States. U.S. citizens will go to jail if they make a $1,000 mistake. You could have earned, $10-, $20,000, paid taxes, and you are forgiven.

The final insult, our tax dollars will go to lawyers that are helping illegal immigrants become legal. That's right, the bill gives money so that those people who are here working in agriculture will have other people who come to them and offer them free legal services to legalize their status.

Well, another problem, problem number 4. The authors of the bill say that this bill will end chain migration. But the bill that is going through the Senate does not end chain migration. Chain migration, just so people will understand, is when we allow relatives of immigrants who are already here to come to the country for family unification. They will do that and get in line before those other people who have been waiting long, long periods of time to emigrate to the United States.

Well, chain immigration is actually dramatically increased by the legislation going through the Senate. Now, they claim they have ended it, but look at what the bill actually does. The bill, right now, there are 138,000 people who come into our country legally through what they call this chain migration, you know, family reunification. For 8 years, they are going to increase that number to 440,000 a year. You get that?

So they say we are not going to change migration, but we are increasing it. We are tripling it for at least 8 years. Does anyone really believe that 8 years from now they are going to then end this? We have tripled chain migration.

The point system, which supposedly will take the place of this chain migration, is a joke. The merit system will not even kick in until 2016. What year is this? That's 9 years from now. So what you have to do is you have to take it on faith that the future Congresses won't scrap this system altogether. But, of course, the merit points are here, we are talking about, are granted for high demand occupations.

Now, what we are talking about here, of course, is the fact that the bill over there provides for a guest worker program and for us to restructure, supposedly restructure the legal immigration coming into our country, even though, by the way, we all know that by granting amnesty that will bring tens of millions of more illegals into the country anyway.

But the legal system, we are going to have a merit system, and we are going to have people coming into our country to fill jobs like janitors, maids, gardeners and other low-skilled occupations.

Well, you know, I can see that instead of bringing people in from overseas by the hundreds of thousands, by the millions, perhaps we should let the market work and let the pay level of our low-skilled workers increase so that our own people can get the job. In this country there are 69 million people of working age who are not working. People say, well, how are you going to get the people to pick the fruit and the vegetables? Some jobs they won't do. The President, of course, has stopped saying they won't do, he says jobs that they aren't doing.

Well, first of all, we have millions upon millions of prisoners. We have more prisoners who are healthy young men, by and large, 18- to 40 years old, who are sitting in prison doing nothing but pumping up, watching TV. Let's let them pick the fruits and vegetables. Let's let them make some money on it. Let's let them help pay for their incarceration.

No, there are people in our country to do the jobs, but they are not going to do it for free, and they are not going to do it for a pittance. I used to work

as a janitor, yet the janitors make about the same as I made when I was a janitor. What's different, the GDP has tripled. The janitors are making about the same amount of money.

Why? Because a flood of illegals have come into this country and bid down wages. Every middle class American working person has had his income brought down by illegals. Oh, yes, it's helped the employers, all right. It's helped the bosses. It's helped the rich people who want to hire illegal nannies. It's helped the people who want their lawns mowed because they would have to pay more wages.

They would have to pay the children of the neighborhood perhaps more than they would pay the illegal immigrant who comes around to mow the lawn. It's better for our country to have these people who are not working paid more money and have the people in our middle class pay more money than bring in millions and millions and millions of people into this country legally or illegally.

Of course, this country, this system would suggest that we bring them in illegally. That's what the Senate, the Kennedy bill, wants to do.

We currently have a 15 percent unemployment rate among those in America with less than a high school education. Why shouldn't we let them get those jobs? Yes, they might have to pay them more money, because they would have to attract them to work. That makes more sense to me than bringing in these people from overseas.

In my own district, I was contacted by people in the health care industry begging me, say we need nurses and health care people. Well, officially, they can't find the nurses and the people to work. They wanted me to support bringing in 100,000 Filipino nurses, 100 now from Pakistan and India.

But these are high-paying jobs, even the high-paying jobs, they want to bring in foreigners to do the jobs. No, this $50- to $75,000 health care job should go to a young American or middle-class American who is working their way through school. It could be a middle-aged American person who just wants to upgrade their skills. It should go to that person.

We went to junior colleges last week during break. I brought all the junior colleges and the hospital people together to find out why we didn't have enough people, trained health care people to work. Why was it a pressure for us to bring people from the outside?

We found out that in our junior colleges where we should be training these people, that they weren't permitted to pay the instructors of the people being trained for these health care programs more than they paid the other instructors who were teaching sociology and political science.

That just means that these nurses, who can earn more money on the outside, won't come to be teachers at junior colleges. They have 185 students at Golden West College who are taking nursing, and yet 24,000 students are taking classes that will enable them to get a job selling clothing at Nordstrom's or being the assistant manager of a 7–Eleven at $35,000 a year when there are $60,000-a-year jobs that are going begging in the health care industry, and they want us to bring in people from the Philippines.

This is wrong. This is a betrayal of the American people to bring people in from outside our country to bring down wages and take the jobs away from the American people who need those jobs. This is wrong.

But people say, no, no, we need a comprehensive bill, there is all this talk about a comprehensive bill. All this talk about a comprehensive bill is a cover, because every part of the legislation going through the Senate actually, that will be implemented, that will be different than the law that exists today, actually encourages the invasion of our country by illegals and by a massive flow of people coming into the country even through the legal system.

Do we need a comprehensive bill in order to try to set up those protections that will protect our border? No. It's already mandated. That bill actually weakens it.

Do we need something to help us with our visa system? No. You know, this isn't helped at all by the legislation going through the Senate.

Do we need it in order to have more Border Patrol agents? No we have already mandated more Border Patrol agents that is required by that bill. All of those aspects of that legislation are covered for the real purpose of the bill, which is to legalize the status of 15 to 20 million illegals who are here, which will then create a massive flow of illegals into this country, which will result in 20 to 30 to 40 million new illegals in this country within 10 years. We will have lost our country. Wake up, America. We already have a flood of illegals sweeping into our country, crowding our classrooms, closing our hospital emergency rooms, up leashing violent crime, driving down wages. None of this is theory.

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It is a harsh reality that faces the American people and is borne not out of academic studies but is being borne out by the life experiences of American people, the American people across our country.

Middle class America is being destroyed. Our communities are not safe, our Social Service infrastructure is collapsing, and, yes, it has everything to do with illegal immigration, immigration that is out of control. And the bill going through the Senate, once they legalize the status of all those who are here illegally, there will be five and six times more illegals, ten times more illegals in our country. And what will happen then? It'll be lost.

Year after year, while our schools have deteriorated, our jails filled and our hospitals and emergency rooms shut down, the elite in this country have turned a blind eye to this disaster that is befalling the rest of us, their fellow Americans. The elites obscure the issues and try to maneuver, to keep in place the policies that reward illegal immigrants with jobs and benefits, just like the bill that's going through the Senate will reward the illegals who have come into our country.

This country, the upper class says, can't function without cheap labor. And it may be cheap to the captains of industry. It may be cheap to the political elite. But it's painfully expensive to the American middle class.

It's our kids whose education is being diminished, our families who are paying thousands more in health insurance to make up for the hospital costs of those who are giving free services to illegals. It's our neighborhoods that are suffering from crime, perpetuated by criminals who have been transported here from other countries. People who should not be here, criminals who should not be here are raping and murdering American citizens. More Americans have been murdered by illegals over the last 5 years than American soldiers have been killed in Iraq. Yet we hear a cry of pain and agony coming from the Congress for soldiers who volunteered to go overseas and take their chances. And what do we hear for the victimized Americans who are being raped and murdered in greater numbers than those being, the Americans being killed in Iraq? We don't hear anything except, well, let's, we need a comprehensive bill, a bill that somehow is going to be fair to the illegal immigrants who are already here.

Our job is not to be fair with people who have come here illegally, not to watch out for the benefit of people who are overseas. Our job as elected officials here, as Members of Congress, is to watch out for the United States of America and the people of the United States of America. There's nothing wrong with that. That's not being selfish.

And what do we hear from some of the Senators backing that legislation, even Republican Senators, as if we're being hateful by expecting our government to watch out for the benefit of Americans, rather than giving benefits away, draining our treasuries and giving it to people who have come here illegally or people in other societies? This is wrong. It's morally wrong. It's a dereliction of our duty as people who were elected to watch out for our people.

It's in our neighborhoods that are suffering from crime that's perpetuated by criminals who are here, as I say, from other countries. It's our livelihood that's being dragged down as wages are depressed and anchored down by a constant influx of immigrants, mostly illegal, some with H1–B visas, who will work for a pittance.

The American people have every right to expect that we're not going to

let masses of people come in and bid down their wages; that we're not going to let people come into this country and give them, like that bill does, immediate legal status when some of them have communicable diseases, diseases which are coming into our schools which we licked years ago, threatening our children.

It is not hateful to say that we have to watch out for our children. It is not wrong for us to put that as a priority and say, yes, we care about those overseas, we care about others. But it is not wrong and hateful and it is not some sort of a selfishness to say we've got to take care of our own people with our limited resources.

Of course, big business has a hold on the GOP. There's no doubt about it. I've been in the party for a long time to see the undue influence that big business has on the party. It's very clear.

Yet big business is in an unholy alliance and the GOP is in an unholy alliance with the liberal left, the liberal left coalition that controls the Democratic party. It is this unholy coalition between the big business element of the Republican party and the liberal left coalition which dominates the Democratic party that is responsible for this invasion of our country, this attack to the well-being of our people. The coalition gives the jobs and passes out the benefits that have lured tens of millions of illegals into our country.

And it's no accident. This predicament was predictable. Big business wants to depress wages. The liberal left that controls the Democratic party wants to have political pawns. They believe that large numbers of illegals will help them change America, or even large numbers of newcomers will help them change America.

Well, if you give the jobs and benefits, as this coalition in our Congress has done for the last 10 years, if you give away the policies that created the jobs and the benefits that have gone to people who've come here illegally from overseas, well, if you give them the jobs and benefits, the masses of the people over there, if you told them that they are eligible for these benefits and these jobs, they will do anything to get here. And that's exactly what they've been doing. As you say, give it, and they will come. Surprise, surprise.

And now, the out-of-touch elite claim this new piece of legislation, the so-called comprehensive bill will, in some way, fix the immigration crisis. That's what you hear.

Well, everybody wants a comprehensive bill because we've got to do something. Doing nothing is better than doing something wrong. Doing nothing is better than doing something that'll make a problem worse. And of course the people who say you've got to do something are the ones who created the problem in the first place.

And, as I said, all of these things that they're trumpeting in the bill, the new enforcement measures, the security measures, the fence, the new agents, the employer sanctions, all of these things are already in place in the law. But we have to give amnesty to illegals and actually encourage tens of millions more to come here in order to get that?

It's like Lucy holding out the football for Charlie Brown. This bill is yet another attempt to trick us as Lucy tricked Charlie every time. It is an illusion, a scam that will make things worse.

The Senate legislation being touted by Senator KENNEDY and the few Republican senators and our President, as I say, the purpose of that bill is to legalize the status of 15 to 20 million illegals, which will then bring tens of millions more. It is a pro-invasion bill. It behooves all of us, all of us to oppose that legislation because we love America.

The President has it all wrong. We want to do what's right for America. That's why we're opposing what he's suggesting.

In that bill, of course, is a provision that would increase the Border Patrol. And, as I say, the legislation going through the Senate actually increases the Border Patrol by fewer agents than is already required that the Border Patrol expand. A great deal has been made out of that. But let's take a look at what that really means.

Do we really believe that President Bush and this administration and, yes, those supporting this bill, are supportive of a strong border control of the fence and strengthening the Border Patrol?

This is an administration that has backed up U.S. attorneys who have taken Border Patrol agents who have stopped drug smugglers at our border and thrown the Border Patrol agents in jail for not following the proper procedures, giving immunity to the drug dealer, and throwing the book at the people, the law enforcement agents who are trying to protect us.

As we speak, Ramos and Compeon, two Border Patrol agents who, for 15 years combined in their lives, were risking their lives every day to protect us. One of them is a 10-year veteran of the Naval Reserve. The other served in the military before joining the Border Patrol. These people have clean records.

Yet the U.S. attorney has thrown the book at these folks, these two brave men, men whose records are clean. And yet he has, the U.S. attorney claims they are corrupt again by playing word games, just like his boss. And today, as we debate this bill, these two Border Patrol agents languish in solitary confinement in Federal prison.

How can anyone claim that they are in favor of the Border Patrol, strengthening the Border Patrol agents, when this administration has done so much to demoralize those people in the Border Patrol and to attack the well-being of those who are protecting us?

The demoralization of our Border Patrol is a grave threat to our national security and the safety of people. We need to back our Border Patrol agents. They do not support this legislation. We need to be strong. We need to make sure that we are doing what is right for the American people. That is what this battle is all about.

Let's remember those two Border Patrol agents because they symbolize everything that's wrong with that legislation, everything that's wrong with the position of the elite in this country. These are just ordinary men, Ramos and Compeon, who were out trying to protect us, just like our military people overseas, risking their life. Yet they were told not to use their weapons on the border, and they did, and they did not follow the proper procedures, and they were thrown in jail.

Remembering them, remembering what we do right for our own people, let us oppose this effort to change the immigration laws that would bring more illegals into our country.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLSWORTH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker; and it is an honor to come to the floor once again. My good colleagues that have, we come to the floor working on behalf of the 30-Something Working Group; and I can just attest that it's just great to be an American and have an opportunity to share our thoughts and ideas and concerns.

As you know, the 30-Something Working Group, we come to the floor to shed light on the action of the House and to talk about this new direction that we fought so hard for last November, especially on the Democratic side of the aisle, to move this country in a new direction and exactly what the American people have called for. So we're excited.

I'm glad to have Mr. ALTMIRE and also Mr. MURPHY here with me tonight. And I know that Mr. MURPHY has been pulling almost a double duty here. I understand he was Acting Speaker a little earlier tonight.

And I had the opportunity, while you were in the Chair, to join Speaker PELOSI celebrating her 20th year of public service, 20 years here in the House. There were a number of great Speakers that were there, honored her family for allowing her to serve this great country of ours, and also recognizing the fact that she's history as being the first female Speaker. But also there were people like Patti LaBelle there, and just a really star-studded event. She deserves that honor and that appreciation; and constituents also, I'm pretty sure, are pretty happy and proud. All Americans are.

With that, I, of course, we, Mr. Speaker, we and mainly as of late, talking about Iraq, and as we speak