

# May 2005 Newsletter

Real ID Reforms Adopted!

See Page 2

New FAIR Study: *Illegal Immigration Costs Texans Nearly \$4.7 Billion a Year*

See Page 3

## **SPECIAL REPORT: *Feet to the Fire 2005 a Success!***

- 500 Activists and 18 Radio Talk Show Hosts Converge on Capitol Hill

See Page 4

- Sunday Morning: *Activist Training*

See Page 5

- Monday Morning: *Rally in Lafayette Park*

See Page 6

- Tuesday Morning: *Capitol Hill Press Conference and Reception*

See Page 7

- Radio Row: *Controlled Chaos*

See Page 8

- The At-Home Lobbying Effort

See Page 9

# Real ID Reforms Adopted!

## **Our Efforts Helped Secure a Major Legislative Victory**

A sustained effort by our members and activists across the country to demand adoption of the national security measures in the Real ID Act finally paid off when a conference committee adopted most of these measures in early May as part of the military supplemental appropriations legislation. As we go to print, the House passed the compromise measure by a landslide, it sailed through the Senate by a vote of 1000, and the White House is committed to signing it. Not only is this a major legislative victory for our members, it is a resounding defeat for our opposition that had expended major political capital on combating the measures.

The Real ID act provides federal standards for states to use in issuing driver's licenses to prevent terrorists and illegal aliens from getting them. It also requires the exchange of license registration information with other states and the federal government to prevent individuals from gaining multiple IDs from different states. Other measures tighten asylum policies that have been used by terrorists, complete a border fence at a favorite crossing point for illegal aliens south of San Diego, and make it easier to deport terrorists.

This is perhaps the most significant immigration reform victory since the reforms enacted in 1996. It was a hard won victory for America's homeland security and basic common sense and will generate real momentum for other badly needed reforms to our immigration policy.

## **New FAIR Study: *Illegal Immigration Costs Texans Nearly \$4.7 Billion a Year***

In President Bush's home state of Texas, mass illegal immigration is draining at least \$4.65 billion a year out of state coffers, finds a new FAIR report, [\*The Costs of Illegal Immigration to Texans\*](#). The Texas cost study, authored by Jack Martin, FAIR's special projects director, is the latest in a series of reports conducted by FAIR about the impact of mass illegal immigration on individual states. Other recent studies have analyzed costs in California and Arizona.

Looking only at the expenses for education, health care and incarceration, FAIR estimates that the state's 1.5 million illegal aliens cost Texas about \$4.65 billion a year, or about \$725 per native-headed household. Using a 1994 study published by the Urban Institute as a baseline, *The Costs of Illegal Immigration to Texans* looks at Census Bureau and other data to estimate the explosive growth in the size and cost of illegal immigration in the nation's second most populous state.

Among the report's key findings are:

- Texas spends more than \$4 billion a year to provide K-12 education for the children of illegal aliens.
- These children account for nearly 12 percent of the total K-12 school population.
- Taxpayer-funded medical outlays for health care provided to the state's illegal alien population amount to about \$520 million a year.
- The uncompensated cost of incarcerating illegal aliens in Texas's state and county prisons amounts to at least \$150 million a year.

If all of the other programs and services used by illegal aliens were accounted for as well, the cost to Texas would be significantly higher, finds the report. Should President Bush's plan to allow millions of illegal aliens become "guest workers," and bring additional family members to join them, these basic costs can also be expected to increase significantly.

## 500 Activists and 18 Radio Talk Show Hosts Converge on Capitol Hill

Members of Congress knew dealing with mass illegal immigration was a hot political issue—and after 500 activists and 18 radio talk show hosts left Washington, D.C., on April 27, many of them had the singed feet to prove it. In the largest and most effective citizen awareness effort the immigration reform movement has seen, members of Congress had their feet held to the fire by citizen lobbyists from all across the country and on the nation's radio airwaves.

Hold Their Feet to the Fire, a joint effort on the part of San Diego radio talk show host Roger Hedgecock and FAIR, proved to be an unqualified success, as the need to control illegal immigration and reform our nation's immigration laws was relentlessly driven home to members of Congress. From April 23 to 27, activists visited all 535 offices on Capitol Hill at least twice, held rallies, spoke to the folks back home over radio, attended a dinner with key immigration reform leaders and participated in a widely covered press conference with key members of Congress.

The immediate goal of Hold Their Feet to the Fire was to convince a recalcitrant Senate to act on the Real ID Act, a critical component of the effort to protect U.S. homeland security by closing gaping loopholes in the issuance of vital identity documents, border security and our asylum system. The bill, which is based on the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, was approved by the House in February, and was included as a provision of a Senate bill to fund the war effort in Iraq and Afghanistan. Leading members of the Senate seemed poised to renege on a promise made last year to enact these security provisions, and the efforts of the Hold Their Feet to the Fire participants proved critical in forcing them to honor their commitment.

The larger objective was to make it clear to every member of Congress that the age of mass immigration and unchecked illegal immigration is over.

In addition to the 18 talk radio hosts who came to Washington and devoted a week's worth of broadcasts to critical immigration issues, at least a dozen more participated from their home bases, discussing these issues and getting live updates from citizen activists in the capital.

Virtually every member of FAIR's staff contributed to the planning and execution of this unprecedented event. From scheduling appointments and providing a crash course in the fundamentals of communicating with Congressional offices, to preparing the materials they handed out to members of Congress and their staffs, to booking guests for the talk show hosts, to organizing the press conference, to organizing the dinner, and dealing with a thousand logistical issues. The Hold Their Feet to the Fire event was an organization-wide undertaking, and its success is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of everyone on staff.

## Sunday Morning: *Activist Training*

By the time the 500 or so activists arrived in Washington on Saturday April 23, they had been assigned to lobbying teams and had appointments in House and Senate offices booked for them. For many it was their first time in Washington and a thrill to be walking the halls of the Congress and registering their concerns.

Getting people oriented, educated and informed to hit Capitol Hill was the primary task of the first full day of Hold Their Feet to the Fire. Dan Stein, president of FAIR, provided an introduction and an overview of what activists were likely to experience during their time in Washington. FAIR's government relations director Paul Egan and government relations associate Sandra Gunn provided a crash course in the fine art of lobbying. Activists familiarized themselves with the issues they would be discussing during the course of the week with members of Congress and their staffs, the materials they would be leaving behind, the best way to approach the issues they would be discussing, and tips for creating an ongoing relationship with the people they met on Capitol Hill.

The citizen lobbyists also learned how they would become valuable assets in the effort to push through the Real ID Act, and to report back the important information that they would learn during three days of visiting congressional offices. More than a thousand congressional office visits were conducted successfully.

## Monday Morning: *Rally in Lafayette Park*

As the host organization, nearly every event of the Hold Their Feet to the Fire effort was planned by FAIR, but the Monday morning rally in Lafayette Park, directly across from the White House, was the work of Atlanta-based activist D.A. King. Like just about everything else associated with the week, the rally in Lafayette Park proved to be an absolute success.

Hundreds of activists publicly demonstrated their demands for real action to control illegal immigration. In addition to King, immigration reform activists and others who happened to be passing by heard from noted talk show hosts Roger Hedgecock, Mark Williams and Terry Anderson; the co-founder of the Minuteman Project, Chris Simcox; Peter Gadiel of 9/11 Families for a Secure America; Bay Buchanan of Team America PAC; Lupe Moreno of Latino Americans for Immigration Reform; John Vinson of Americans for Immigration Control; and Erin Anderson a resident of the besieged Arizona border area.

Fresh from the success of the Minuteman Project that attracted worldwide media attention, Simcox brought the message from the border directly to the White House. "We are demanding, not asking, for secure and safe borders. We are demanding, not asking, for the enforcement of existing immigration laws," Simcox told the crowd. "We will remain on duty until we are relieved by Humvees filled with National Guard or U.S. military troops."

While the planning and execution of the rally was entirely carried out by King and other activists, FAIR provided printed signs and a banner calling for an end to illegal immigration.

## Tuesday Morning: Capitol Hill Press Conference and Reception

While the radio talk show hosts were feeding a steady stream of information and updates to listeners all across the country, the national media got a glimpse of the Hold Their Feet to the Fire campaign at a Capitol Hill news conference that included FAIR president Dan Stein and leading members of the Congressional Immigration Reform Caucus. The Tuesday press conference, held in a packed room of one of the House office buildings, featured Reps. Lamar Smith (R-Tex.), Ed Royce (R-Calif.), Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.), J.D. Hayworth (R-Ariz.), Virgil Goode (R-Va.) and caucus chairman Tom Tancredo (R-Colo.).

All of the members of Congress who participated expressed confidence that the Real ID Act would be enacted by the Senate despite fierce opposition from open immigration advocacy groups. There was also a growing sense of confidence that momentum is building for far more extensive reforms in immigration policy and enforcement.

Speaking at the press conference Stein told the media, "FAIR and members of the House Immigration Reform Caucus have worked around the clock to make the Real ID Act a reality for the security of American citizens," and that its enactment "will be a giant leap towards protecting our nation from those who would exploit our generosity and openness to do us harm. It will solidify the American people's strong desire for meaningful reforms that protect and defend our national interests."

The press conference was followed by a Capitol Hill reception for activists who got the opportunity to meet key members of the Immigration Reform Caucus and personally express their appreciation to those members of Congress who have been bucking the special interests and fighting the good fight in Washington.

## Radio Row: *Controlled Chaos*

With 18 radio programs broadcasting at all hours of the day to audiences in every time zone, radio row, headquartered at a hotel on Capitol Hill, was a constant beehive of activity. Hosts, producers and FAIR staff helped coordinate a steady stream of guests that included more than a dozen members of Congress, citizen activists, and FAIR spokespersons.

Members of Congress who stopped by Radio Row:

- Sen. George Allen
- Sen. Jon Kyl
- Sen. Rick Santorum
- Sen. Arlen Specter
- Sen. Zell Miller (phoned in)
- Rep. Tom Tancredo
- Rep. Phil Gingrey
- Rep. John Sullivan
- Rep. Marsha Blackburn
- Rep. Gary Miller
- Rep. Ed Royce
- Rep. Dana Rohrabacher
- Rep. Tim Ryan
- Rep. Ted Strickland
- Rep. Lamar Smith

In addition, we also worked with 15 other shows that formed the broadcast-from-home phalanx of the Hold Their Feet to the Fire radio effort.

From early morning broadcast slots in the East Coast to late night broadcasts to the West Coast, the topic of immigration reform and controlling illegal immigration burned up the airwaves for the better part of a week, reaching and energizing millions of listeners to become involved. In addition to the activists who joined the talk show hosts in Washington, the hosts exhorted millions of listeners to "lobby from home" by calling, faxing and emailing members of Congress. FAIR's website served as conduit for thousands of messages to Congress.



## The At-Home Lobbying Effort

The 500 activists who made the journey to Washington, many from as far away as the West Coast, were augmented by a much larger and no less important group of activists who lobbied from home. These activists flooded Capitol switchboards, fax machines and email in-boxes with the same clear and consistent message: Enact the Real ID Act, secure America's borders, and institute real immigration reform.

More than 14,000 messages were routed through FAIR's own web site to members of Congress, while countless more phone calls and messages went directly to Capitol Hill offices. To maximize the impact of this citizens' effort, a coordinated, three-pronged strategy was employed over the three days of the Hold Their Feet to the Fire campaign. The thousands of at-home lobbyists—who rallied to the support of the folks who came to Washington—flooded congressional email in-boxes with messages in support of Real ID on Monday. Tuesday saw a massive phone campaign, during which activists from all across the country called Capitol Hill offices with the same message. By the time the activists on the ground began making personal visits to congressional offices, members and their staffs knew that the people coming to meet them represented thousands of their own constituents and millions of people around the country.

A sampling of the feedback passed along to FAIR from at-home lobbyists indicates that the hundreds of calls coming through to Capitol Hill offices were having an impact.

"Called all our wonderful senators and representatives today... The lady who answered at Senator Burns (R-Mont.) told me they were still getting a lot of calls on this issue."

"My impression is that we are jamming their switchboards and they cannot handle the volume of calls."

"Thank you FAIR for the opportunity to contribute to this most important cause!"