



FAIR FEDERATION FOR AMERICAN IMMIGRATION REFORM

Immigration REPORT

MAY 2014

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Hold Their Feet to the Fire 2014

FAIR Assembles 50 Talk Shows in One Place

On April 9 and 10, FAIR hosted its eighth annual Hold Their Feet to the Fire radio row in Washington, D.C. This annual event provides an important missing component to the immigration policy debate that is raging in the nation's capital: the voice of the American people.

As the 113th Congress heads into the legislative home stretch, the discussion about how to reform U.S. immigration policies has been centered on how to accommodate the millions of people who are in our country ille-

gally (i.e. how, and under what conditions, we should grant them amnesty), and how to satisfy the insatiable demand of business interests to gain greater access to low-wage foreign labor.

Conspicuously absent from the debate has been consideration of the interests of those our immigration laws are supposed to protect: the American people. Under the current administration, those interests are not merely absent; they are deliberately excluded from the debate.

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Boehner "Hellbent" on Passing Amnesty

Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio), under pressure from House Republicans and his party's political base, announced in February that it was unlikely that the House would move forward with an illegal alien amnesty and immigration increase bill in 2014. Since then, the business lobby has committed millions more dollars to their effort to force the House to pass legislation similar to the Senate Gang of Eight bill, S.744.

According to *The Wall Street Journal*, at a Las Vegas fundraiser in March, Speaker Boehner told a roomful of "donors and industry groups" that he is "hellbent on getting [an amnesty and immigration increase] done this year." The Speaker's determination to pass legislation over the objections of his own caucus was further reinforced by Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.), who told the high-tech business association, the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, that House action on immigration is "entirely likely" this year.

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California Republican Says Join Military and Get Amnesty Today

If we needed more evidence that the House Republican leadership is looking for any opening to advance amnesty legislation, we need look no further than what occurred during consideration of legislation authorizing funding for the U.S. military in FY 2015. Pro-amnesty House Republicans launched an effort to add Rep. Jeff Denham's (R-Calif.) ENLIST Act (H.R. 2377) as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act.

The ENLIST Act requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue green cards (legal permanent resident status) to certain illegal aliens just for enlisting in the military. The only conditions are that the illegal aliens: (1) entered the U.S. before 2012; and (2) were younger than 15 when they entered the country.

The effort was temporarily halted when House Armed Services Committee Chairman Buck McKeon (R-Calif.) declined to include the amendment in the original version of the legislation. However, McKeon left open the possibility that the amendment could be added to the NDAA when the Committee begins marking up the bill. (The mark-up is expected to occur in late April or early May, after completion of this edition of the FAIR newsletter.)



The effort to use military service as a vehicle for granting amnesty was publicly endorsed by House Majority Leader Eric Cantor. In April, Cantor's office issued a statement expressing support for legislation enabling "a young man or woman who was brought to this country as a child and knows no other home and wants to serve our nation in uniform" to gain amnesty by enlisting in the military.

FAIR has strongly opposed allowing illegal aliens to gain amnesty by serving in the military. Legislation authorizing money and resources for the men and women who defend our nation and our laws should not be used to provide citizenship to people who violate our laws and settle here illegally.

Americans have proudly served our nation throughout our history as a matter of honor and duty. It is a bad and dangerous precedent to open up the ranks of our military to people whose primary motivation for service is obtaining amnesty for their, or their parents', violation of our immigration laws. Moreover, enactment of the ENLIST Act, either as an amendment to the NDAA or as freestanding legislation, could potentially endanger national security by allowing those who are hostile to our country to infiltrate our military.

From a national defense perspective, the ENLIST Act is entirely unnecessary. The armed services have had no trouble in meeting recruiting goals with highly qualified and highly motivated Americans. Moreover, as recently as February, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, called for shrinking Army enlistment to its lowest levels since before World War II, and the Department of Defense is forcing young officers out of the military as part of its downsizing plan. The administration's plan is to reduce the size of the active duty Army from its current level of 522,000 to about 440,000.

Ironically, at a time when mass illegal immigration is increasing the difficulty for younger Americans to find jobs in the private sector, the House Republican leadership is promoting legislation that will make it more difficult for them to serve in a downsized military.

Immigration REPORT

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Across the Country—FAIR Steps Up

Connecticut

The Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education rejected a petition to grant illegal aliens the same access to institutional financial aid as citizens and legal resident students. The petition had been filed by a group known as the Connecticut Students for a Dream (with the help of the Yale Law School's Worker and Immigrants' Rights Advocacy Clinic). In response, **Dale Wilcox, FAIR's State and Local Legislative Director, worked to oppose financial aid for illegal aliens arguing, among other things, that it would violate federal law.** In denying the petition, the Board of Regents asserted that they lacked the authority to grant additional aid to illegal aliens and agreed with FAIR's view that doing so would run contrary to federal law.

Florida

On April 17, State Senate Budget Committee Chairman Joe Negron (R-Stuart) announced that his committee would not hold a vote on S.B. 1400, a bill that would grant in-state tuition benefits to illegal aliens attending Florida public colleges and universities. Sen. Negron's decision effectively kills S.B. 1400's chances of passage in the Florida Legislature. In-state tuition benefits for illegal aliens had gained the support of Republican Gov. Rick Scott, who is facing reelection in November. Negron cited the impact of granting in-state tuition to illegal aliens on the state's budget and on struggling families in Florida as his reason for quashing the bill. "If state colleges and universities can absorb the tens of millions of dollars in lost tuition, what effect will this policy have on limited financial aid funds for Florida students and parents?" Negron said in a statement. "I believe it is imprudent to commit Florida to a new statewide education law without first ascertaining the present and future fiscal impact." **FAIR worked with true immigration reform activists in Florida, including Floridians for Immigration Enforcement, to rally public opposition to S.B. 1400.**

Oregon

Referendum 301, a citizen-backed ballot measure to overrule the Oregon Legislature's decision to grant driver's licenses to illegal aliens, received a major boost in April when the Sheriffs of Oregon Political Action Committee came out in opposition to granting licenses to illegal aliens. The association, which represents Oregon's 36 sheriffs, rejected the primary argument used by supporters of licenses for illegal aliens that doing so would enhance public safety. Speaking on behalf of the group, Sheriff Tom Bergin (Clatsop County) asserted that "Offering the privilege to drive to people who are breaking the law makes no sense to those of us who enforce the law...It just doesn't pass the 'common sense' test." The Sheriffs group's announcement occurred just days after Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack appeared at FAIR's Hold Their Feet to the Fire radio row.



"OFFERING THE PRIVILEGE TO DRIVE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE BREAKING THE LAW MAKES NO SENSE TO THOSE OF US WHO ENFORCE THE LAW...IT JUST DOESN'T PASS THE 'COMMON SENSE' TEST."

SHERIFF TOM BERGIN,
SHERIFFS OF OREGON
POLITICAL ACTION
COMMITTEE

The intense two-day discussion of immigration policy was the first step in making sure the interests of the American people are included in the policy debate.

Among the other hot topics discussed at Hold Their Feet to the Fire were:

- The administration's deceptive and misleading deportation claims.
- The efforts of the business lobby to increase the influx of foreign workers at a time of high unemployment.
- The House Republican leadership's attempts to move amnesty legislation.
- The fiscal impact of illegal immigration on state and local taxpayers.
- The impact of crimes perpetrated by illegal aliens against American citizens, both at the border and in the interior of the country.





Congressional Hispanic Caucus Ramps Up Demands to Stop All Deportations

Despite increasing acknowledgement in the mainstream media that deportations of non-criminal illegal aliens has all but ceased, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus is demanding that the Obama administration not only take additional steps to limit deportations, but also find new ways to allow many who have already been deported to return to the country.

Following up on President Obama's announcement in March that he has ordered the Department of Homeland Security to review its deportation practices, members of the CHC met with Secretary Jeh Johnson to discuss their ideas for further restricting immigration enforcement. During the meeting the CHC members handed Johnson a six-page memo detailing a list of "policy options" for meeting their demands. CHC member

Luis Gutierrez (D-Ill.) also indicated that if the House does not pass an amnesty bill before the Fourth of July, he expects the administration to begin asserting even broader executive authority to ignore statutory mandates to enforce immigration laws.

While it is unlikely that the administration would implement all of CHC's "policy options," there is every reason to believe that President Obama will announce further restrictions on deportations and other protections for illegal aliens in the coming months, unless he believes the House is prepared to act on his legislative demands. Doing so would also increase pressure on Congress to limit the president's use of executive authority, especially since Mr. Obama has repeatedly asserted that he lacks the constitutional authority to implement such policies.

CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS'

Policy Options

- Expand DACA to include parents and siblings of those who have benefited.
- Expand "humanitarian parole" to allow relatives of DACA beneficiaries and legal permanent residents outside the U.S. to enter and be placed on an automatic path to citizenship.
- Expand the definition of "extreme hardship" to grant waivers to illegal aliens with U.S. citizen relatives.
- Halt deportations of illegal aliens who have been convicted of illegal entry (a misdemeanor) or illegal re-entry (a felony).
- Halt deportations of illegal aliens who have been in the country more than six months.
- Restrict the use of expedited removal of illegal aliens apprehended near the border without formal proceedings, and implement a screening process to determine the appropriate removal process for all illegal aliens caught near the border.
- Reduce the number of detainers issued for illegal alien convicts, and eliminate of local-federal cooperation programs like 287(g) and Secure Communities.



HOLD THEIR FEET TO THE FIRE *continued*

OVER THE YEARS, FAIR HAS FOUND A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL METHOD FOR INJECTING (HOWEVER UNWELCOME BY THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA) THE INTERESTS OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC INTO THIS IMPORTANT NATIONAL POLICY ISSUE.

Through our partnership with talk radio, we have repeatedly been able to raise the questions and concerns that many politicians in Washington try their best to ignore. In February, when Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) announced that legislative action in the House was unlikely in 2014, the pro-amnesty *Wall Street Journal* credited talk radio for forcing that decision.

Hold Their Feet to the Fire 2014 brought together 42 national and local talk radio hosts for two days to discuss immigration with policy experts, law enforcement offi-

cers, people who live along our lawless borders, and members of Congress who are willing to stand up for the interests of their constituents in the debate.

Last year, Hold Their Feet to the Fire kicked off just hours after S. 744, the Gang of Eight amnesty bill, was introduced on the floor of the Senate. This year, the event occurred as advocates for amnesty were renewing pressure on the House to pass legislation, and as pressure was being applied to get President Obama to halt virtually all enforcement against illegal aliens who have

not been convicted of serious or violent crimes. In March, President Obama ordered the Department of Homeland Security to review its deportation practices to find ways for the administration to further ignore its constitutional obligation to enforce immigration laws.

In the coming months, as President Obama decides how, or if, he will unilaterally weaken immigration enforcement, and the House leadership flirts with reviving amnesty, talk radio will be instrumental in FAIR's efforts to mobilize public opposition.

BOEHNER HELLBENT *continued*

Carl Guardino, chief executive of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, reported that Goodlatte suggested that House action would likely occur over the summer. According to Guardino, the House leadership's so-called piecemeal approach to immigration reform would take the form of five to seven bills that would roughly add up to what is in the massive Senate Gang of Eight bill.

In addition, the *Journal* reports that the House leadership has given Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart the green light to draft legislation that would allow many illegal aliens to apply for citizenship under existing channels and to have it ready by June or July.

While the intense pressure from the corporate lobby appears to be getting to House leaders, they will still need to contend with opposition from their caucus and from the American public. Also complicating

matters is the increasing tension between Republicans and the White House and congressional Democrats.

President Obama publicly accused Republicans of being intransigent on immigration, charging that they "have repeatedly failed to take action, seemingly preferring the status quo of a broken immigration system over meaningful reform." The president's remarks drew sharp rebuke from House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.). "The president called me hours after he issued a partisan statement which attacked me and my fellow House Republicans and which indicated no sincere desire to work together," complained Cantor, who has been among the House leaders pushing for passage of amnesty legislation.

Adding to the bad blood are recent comments from key House Democratic leaders accusing Repub-

lican opponents of amnesty with racism. In April, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee chairman Rep. Steve Israel (D-N.Y.) said, "To a significant extent, the Republican base does have elements that are animated by racism." His remarks echoed those of House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) who opined, "I think race has something to do with them not bringing up the immigration bill."

Despite the partisan bickering, it is appears increasingly likely that the House leadership will make a serious bid to pass amnesty and immigration increases over the summer. FAIR will keep members and activists informed, through alerts and updates, on how they can respond to these efforts. **We encourage all FAIR members to sign up for our alerts at our website, fairus.org.**

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