

Bipartisan Republican Suicide Proposal

GOP Offered the Poisoned Chalice

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A Bipartisan Gang of Eight in the U.S. Senate has teamed up to offer a Poisoned Chalice to nervous Republicans in the form of immigration "reform." The four Republican senators are perennial immigration amnesty advocates John McCain (AZ) and Lindsey Graham (SC); Jeff Flake (AZ) whose career voting record on immigration issues is comparable to Graham's; and hoped-to-be-conservative Marco Rubio, whose career voting record on immigration issues is only slightly less liberal than McCain's. Many Republicans are taking this new amnesty proposal seriously because the Hispanic vote rose to over 10 percent of the electorate in the 2012 election and was even more Democratic than the usual two-to-one advantage over Republicans. The Hispanic share of the electoral vote is also likely to grow as a direct result of past amnesties and Federal Government failure to enforce immigration policies. The sales pitch to Republicans is that voting for this new amnesty will gain them more Hispanic votes. As with all the other amnesties (six) from 1987 to the Obama Administration, this one promises to be the last one necessary.

The four Democratic senators of this Gang of Eight are Charles Schumer (NY), Dick Durbin (IL), Bob Menendez (NJ), and Michael Bennet (CO). Schumer's career voting record on immigration rates an F grade by the conservative Numbers USA immigration watch and education organization. The others got F-, the worst possible grade. Let us not deceive ourselves into believing that any of these Democrat senators are interested in immigration policies that are fair to American workers, families, and taxpayers, much less to Republican conservatives. .

Most Republican office holders and candidates would like to increase the Republican share of the Hispanic vote, but they do not want to compromise basic conservative principles. This poses a major dilemma for Republican consideration of the Gang of Eight version of immigration "reform." The bottom line is that most Latino voters prefer big government and generous social-welfare programs to limited government and low taxes. Volumes of competent research indicate that a Republican vote for amnesty will not change this. For example, a 2011 Pew National Survey of Latinos indicated that 75 percent prefer bigger government and more services to smaller government and fewer services compared to only 41 percent of the U.S. general population. For Republicans, amnesty by any name, is a poison chalice that gains no Latino votes, swells the ranks of new Democrat voters, and further alienates its own conservative base.

Many conservatives are already disappointed and even angry with the Republican Party for not standing on conservative principles. Failure to address immigration and social issues is a top complaint among these disenfranchised voters. In the last two presidential elections, many of them have registered their feelings of betrayal by not voting. Seven million Republicans, who voted in 2008, did not vote in 2012. Between 2004 and 2012, a total of eleven million normally Republican voters stayed at home. A substantial part of this deflated Republican enthusiasm is undoubtedly the reluctance of national Republican leadership to address immigration issues on any terms but wimpy surrender to political correctness and denial of the disheartening and damaging impact of runaway immigration on the lives of American workers, families, and taxpayers.

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On January 28, Pennsylvania Republican Congressman Lou Barletta summarized the dilemma to the Lehigh Valley Morning Call:
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"I hope politics is not at the root of why we're rushing to pass a bill. Anyone who believes that they're going to win over the Latino vote is grossly mistaken. The majority that are here illegally are low-skilled or may not even have a high school diploma. The Republican Party is not going to compete over who can give more social programs out. They will become Democrats because of the social programs they'll depend on."

The next morning, Senator Jeff Sessions (R, AL) rose to speak on the floor of the Senate to address the likely cost of the Senate proposal:

"Amnesty will not help balance our budget. In fact, a large-scale amnesty is likely to add trillions of dollars to the debt over time, accelerate Medicare's and Social Security's slide into insolvency, and put enormous strain on our public assistance programs. We know already that the administration refuses to enforce existing law restricting immigrant welfare use, and in fact promotes expanded welfare use to immigrants—including food stamps, public housing, and Medicaid. I joined with four Ranking Members to obtain answers from the Department of Homeland Security about this evisceration of law, and the Administration has suspiciously defied three consecutive oversight requests....We would be in much better position to achieve immigration reform if the Obama Administration had spent that last four years enforcing federal law rather than dismantling it."

History has taught us that amnesties encourage more illegal immigration and more amnesties. Based on the 1987 amnesty, amnesty for the 11 million illegal immigrants estimated to be in the country now could result in another 22 to 33 million more illegal immigrants within 20 years. The cost could be nation destroying.

McCain, Graham, and Flake are "accommodationists" on immigration. "Accommodation" in this sense is essentially step-by-step surrender—frequently without realizing it. It is the Neville Chamberlain formula for peace and social change. Rubio may have a different motivation for being in the group, but he is taking a risk that association with the leading accommodationist Republicans in the Senate, generally more liberal on other issues than him, will tarnish his reputation as a leading conservative, which has not yet been fully earned.

A recent article in the Wall Street Journal by Richard F. Lamountain called Illegal-Alien Amnesty the GOP's "Poisoned Chalice." He is exactly right. Republicans had better concentrate on recovering and motivating the lost millions in their conservative base rather than carving "The Stupid Party" on their tombstone and gulping down the suicide potion being offered to them by Democrats, accommodationist Republicans, and the liberal media.

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