

# GOP Strategy Suggestion

## *Immigration control is the real road to any Republican victory*

by Samuel Francis

Newt Gingrich's long national nightmare may or may not be over, but the bad dreams of the Republican Party are just beginning. With the Speaker taken down a peg by his ethics problems and the implosion of the party's disastrous presidential ticket last year, the Republicans seem now about to enter a period of leaderlessness in which major national issues will remain undefined and undirected.

One such issue is immigration and what the majority party in Congress intends to do about it. Despite passing a major immigration bill last year, Congress is not yet through with the issue. Last year's law mainly addressed illegal immigration but said virtually nothing about its legal variety. A recent article in *Congressional Quarterly*, a major source of inside dope about Congress and its dopesters, explores this very matter.

As the article remarks, Republican leadership in reforming immigration law is

crippled not only by its leadership's weakness but also by the party's natural timidity. Not only has Sen. Alan Simpson, long the main Republican leader of reform efforts, retired, but also the evolving conventional wisdom among Republicans is that legal immigration is just too hot to handle.

The *Congressional Quarterly* article pushes that very point, suggesting that "the recent election ... is not likely to help the restrictionist cause.... [Republicans] were stung by a backlash at the polls in some parts of the country" because of their support for controlling illegal immigration.

President Clinton's victories in Florida and Arizona, both strong Republican bases, with the help of the Hispanic vote, coupled with the defeat of Rep. Bob Dornan in California, are supposed to be proof positive of the dangers of immigration reform for Republicans. It's a proof that various neoconservative and libertarian stalwarts of the open borders crowd have also dredged up, to frighten Republicans away from the issue.

If the GOP doesn't drop immigration reform, the argument goes, it will face political disaster by driving the growing Hispanic bloc into the hands of the Democrats.

Republicans are creatures that frighten easily, and their natural proclivity is to swallow this argument without serious scrutiny.

But with serious scrutiny the argument is not very swallowable. In the first place, the Hispanic vote has always gone mainly to the Democrats. Only the anti-communist Cuban-Americans in Florida have tended to vote Republican.

In the second place, no Republican congressman closely associated with immigration restriction was defeated last year. Reps. Lamar Smith of Texas and Elton Gallegly and Ed Royce of California were all re-elected; all are outspoken champions of cutting legal immigration. Mr. Dornan was not; he strongly supported legal immigration, and it didn't help him at all. Nor was Jack Kemp, whom the Hispanic bloc rejected despite his zeal for immigration.

Moreover, the Hispanic bloc is by and large a liberal bloc, and immigration is only one reason it votes against Republicans. Others include Republican opposition to welfare and affirmative action and support for law and order. If you listen to those who say the GOP ought to give up on the immigration issue, you might as well surrender on most other Republican issues too.

But the main reason the

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argument is flawed is offered by the *Congressional Quarterly* article itself. "National polls," it tells us, "continue to show that people are uneasy with the roughly one million people who are granted immigration visas each year. (A February Roper poll showed that 83 percent of the public thought that number was too high.)"

In fact, the Roper poll showed that among those wanting cuts, the majority favors virtually ending legal immigration into this country. It makes no sense at all to claim that Republicans ought to abandon efforts to reduce legal immigration because of the

danger of a political backlash when more than 8 out of 10 Americans want it reduced.

Nevertheless, Mr. Gingrich did not even mention immigration in his victory speech. The tendency of Republicans is to seize on the flawed argument against immigration control as the path of least resistance, and since their natural friends and ideological soulmates among Big Business and the open-borders lobby favor unrestricted immigration, that's the path they are likely to travel.

But the Roper poll shows the real road for Republicans, who can use immigration reform as a

means of repairing their leaderless and rudderless party. They can do so, not by evading the issue, but by making immigration control a major part of their program, and they can arm themselves with the groaning shelves of studies that show the harm that uncontrolled immigration inflicts. That road may require more courage and brains than the current Republican leadership now possesses, but if they take it they could wind up with a real Republican majority in the country as well as one in Congress.

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