

On Foreigners, Kemp Borders on Foolish

by Don Feder

Former congressman and vice presidential candidate Jack Kemp — who has to be the most clueless Republican in creation — is leading a drive to undermine America with more immigration.

As Bob Dole's running mate, Kemp rendered an embarrassing performance of pandering for minority votes that ultimately proved futile.

Undaunted, the GOP pander-bear is back. Allied with Henry Cisneros, President Clinton's first secretary of housing and urban development, Kemp is calling for an increase in legal immigration and an amnesty for 400,000 illegal aliens.

America is already awash with the foreign-born. They aren't anything like Emma Lazarus' "huddled masses yearning to breathe free." They aren't appropriately grateful to be here. In fact, in all too many cases, they have either their hands out or their fists raised.

In 1998, we had 26.3 million legal immigrants, who represented

9.8 percent of the total population. That's more than double the percentage of 1970. Between 1990 and 1998, immigrants and their children accounted for 70 percent of total population growth.

Another amnesty for those who wiped their feet on our laws as they entered this country? Why not? The last one worked so well.

In 1986, we offered amnesty to those who'd been here illegally since 1982. More than 3 million took advantage of the program.

Amnesties send a message to border-jumpers: If you can elude the authorities long enough, eventually you'll get a green card. That was the effect of the 1986 amnesty. According to the National Council of La Raza, a Hispanic advocacy group, between 1980 and 1990, the number of illegals grew by over 60 percent.

According to the Census Bureau, post-1980 immigrants are poorer and less educated than the population as a whole. Among 1990-1998 immigrants, 35 percent lack a high school diploma (compared to 9 percent of the native-born). The poverty rate for all immigrants is 50 percent higher than for natives.

The National Center for Policy Analysis notes that in 1980, fewer than 9,000 criminal aliens were incarcerated in state and federal prisons. 9,000 criminal aliens were incarcerated in state and federal

prisons. By 1994, more than 450,000 aliens were guests of our penal system.

Thanks to immigration, English as our common language is rapidly disappearing. Minnesota Legal Assistance is suing to have welfare applications printed in other languages. Why should an inability to speak English be a bar to a parasitic existence?

According to the March 30 *Philadelphia Inquirer*, immigrant store-owners in the city are complaining about the lack of health inspectors who can communicate with them in their native tongue.

The head of the Korean-American Grocers Association told the newspaper that most of his group's 970 members speak little or no English. God forbid that someone should come here, open a business and bother to learn our language.

Most Americans have at least an intuitive grasp of the problem. In an October 1999 Pew Research Center poll, 72 percent mostly or completely agreed with the statement, "We need more restrictions and controls on immigration."

Besides throwing away a legitimate issue with overwhelming public support, by embracing liberal immigration policy Republicans are committing slow suicide.

Due almost exclusively to new immigrant voters, Democrats now

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dominate California politics, controlling all but two statewide offices, along with huge majorities in the Legislature.

Statewide, Mexican-Americans are voting Democratic by a 3-1 ratio. In March, Vice President Al Gore led Gov. George Bush by a whopping 41 points among Hispanics, despite the latter's Spanish speeches and immigration positions virtually identical to Gore's.

Kemp would say Republicans are paying for their support of Proposition 187, the 1994 ballot measure to cut off government services for illegal aliens.

But even if Republicans embraced open borders, many of the new immigrants are the low-income benefit-seekers who are the Democratic Party's natural constituency. Unless it decides to get into a bidding war with the opposition on government goodies,

the GOP can't overcome the Democrats' advantage here.

Like Sen. John McCain, Kemp is a Republican who craves the media's acclaim. "Isn't he progressive. Isn't he humane," commentators will croon over this latest instance of Kempian compassion. That it's bad for his party, and awful for America, doesn't figure into Kemp's calculations. €