

# End Birthright Citizenship

By VIRGIL GOODE

In his address to the country on immigration, President Obama said that “being an American is not a matter of blood or birth.” Our current government policy of giving automatic U.S. citizenship to the children of illegal aliens who are born on American soil makes being American solely a matter of birth.

Americans are quickly waking up to the disaster that is the arbitrary government policy of guaranteed automatic citizenship to the children of illegal aliens. A Rasmussen Poll found that 58 percent of Americans opposed granting citizenship to the children of illegal aliens, while only 33 percent supported it.

Birthright citizenship creates a massive fiscal burden on the American taxpayer. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 specifically states that illegal aliens and even many legal immigrants are “not eligible for any federal public benefit” with a few exceptions, such as disaster relief.

According to the Pew Hispanic Center, there are four million children of illegal aliens who received U.S. citizenship by the sole virtue of being born in the United States. Over one-third of these children live at or below the poverty line and are eligible for a host of welfare programs that they would not receive were it not for birthright citizenship.

Additionally, Obama’s healthcare legislation created a huge loophole that allows illegal aliens to use birthright citizenship to receive government subsidized health care. While there are verification loopholes, the legislation makes illegal aliens ineligible for taxpayer funded “Affordability Credits.”

However, the bill intentionally does not address what would happen if an illegal immigrant family had a U.S. citizen child. According to Pew, 8.8 million people live in such mixed families.

The Congressional Research Service noted that under Obama’s legislation, “it appears that the Health Choices commissioner would be responsible for determining how the credits would be administered in the case of mixed-status families.”

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*Virgil Goode represented Virginia’s 5th Congressional District from 1997 through 2009. © King Street Media.*

In other words, Obama’s health czar will decide whether or not to give free healthcare to the families of illegal aliens. I wonder what side they will rule on!

Birthright citizenship makes it much more difficult to enforce our immigration laws. When an illegal immigrant is detained, they can use the fact that they have citizen children as extenuating circumstances that make them a “hardship case” when appealing deportation orders.

This is why I have used the term “anchor baby” to describe them. The critics of this term are the same people who are trying to make the anchor drop even deeper. During his immigration speech, President Obama stated we cannot deport illegal aliens because “it would tear at the very fabric of this nation—because immigrants who are here illegally are now intricately woven into that fabric. Many have children who are American citizens.”

The costly policy of granting birthright citizenship is based upon a misinterpretation of the Citizenship Clause of the 14th Amendment. It states, “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside.” This was clearly designed to guarantee for the purpose of ensuring that the children of freed slaves could not be denied citizenship. Granting citizenship to the children of illegal aliens is a completely arbitrary interpretation that has never been ruled on by the courts or passed by statute.

When I served in Congress, I co-sponsored ten bills to end birthright citizenship either by statute or constitutional amendment. Rep. Nathan Deal’s Birthright Citizenship Act of 2009 (H.R.1868) currently has 92 co-sponsors. With the federal government far behind on upholding its constitutional duties on immigration, the states are once again stepping in.

State Rep. Leo Berman of Texas introduced a bill to deny benefits to children of illegal aliens, and state Rep Randy Terrill of Oklahoma and state Sen. Russell Pearce of Arizona—who wrote SB 1070—are planning on introducing similar legislation.

Mark Twain wrote, “Citizenship is what makes a republic.” Our policy of giving the children of illegal aliens citizenship cheapens one of the most basic building blocks of our Republic. ■