

VFW, American Legion, and Retired Border Patrol Officers Opposed Amnesty

Editor's Note: A number of national veterans and law enforcement organizations took a public stand against granting amnesty to illegal aliens. We reprint statements below by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Retired Border Patrol Officers, and the American Legion.

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
 July 28, 1982
 Hon. Jesse Helms,
 U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Helms:

I have just been informed of your proposed amendment to the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill, and I both thank and applaud you for this clear restatement of first principles.

"Amnesty" by any name simply means that the Congress will have quit on the problem because it is tough and politically sensitive.

You, and your great colleague, Senator East, have given us a timely reminder that we are a nation of laws. Best personal wishes.

Most cordially,

Arthur J. Fellwock
 National Commander-in-Chief

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States,
 July 28, 1982

TO: Members, United States Senate

From: Arthur J. Fellwock, National Commander-in-Chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States strongly supports the amendment to S.2222/HR 6514, "The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1982" (the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill) put forward by Senators Helms and East (both of North Carolina).

This amendment would strip from the bill its provisions for a wide and generous amnesty to aliens residing illegally in this country.

My reasons follow:

First, despite disclaimers, the Simpson-Mazzoli

amnesty provisions would be a magnet for aliens not already in this country to enter illegally and swell the ranks of the 5-6 million illegals already here.

Second, "amnestying" the 5-6 million illegal aliens already here would, according to Executive Branch sources, cost up to \$10 billion over the next four years in welfare payments, food stamps, etc.

A small portion of this amount could be properly applied to reinforcing the thinly stretched Border Patrol to the end that our already generous legal immigration could be adequately policed; and, finally,

Third, the gut, bottom-line issues are: 1) do we regain control of our borders or not; and 2) do we turn a blind eye to law enforcement when it is difficult or politically sensitive.

Acceptance of S.2222/HR 6514 ("Simpson-Mazzoli"), with its amnesty provisions intact, would neither see us regain control of our borders nor foster respect for equitable laws already on the books.

For this reason, I urge passage of the Helms-East Amendment to basic legislation.

Cordially,

Arthur J. Fellwock
 National Commander-in-Chief

Mr. Helms. Mr. President. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1982, S.2222, contains provisions which would grant amnesty to millions of aliens who have entered the United States illegally.

Those charged with the responsibility of patrolling our borders, and who have first-hand knowledge of the current crisis situation, advise caution concerning this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a letter from Mr. Gordon J. MacDonald, retired Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the Border Patrol, writing on behalf of the Fraternal Order of Retired Border Patrol Officers, be printed in the *Record* at the conclusion of my remarks.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the *Record* as follows:

The Fraternal Order of Retired Border Patrol Officers, Office of the Secretary, Vienna, Va., July 10, 1982.

Hon. Jesse A. Helms
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Helms:

This is to express my sincere appreciation for your recent, most worthy stand on immigration reform. In my capacity as Founder and Secretary of The Fraternal Order of Retired Border Patrol Officers, I am in recurrent contact with several thousand immigration enforcement officers, both on-duty officers and former Immigration Investigators and Border Patrol Agents. I can assure you, Senator, to a man, they support your proposed effort to remove the legalization (amnesty) provision from immigration reform bill S. 2222.

The American Legion, Washington, D.C., July 28, 1982

Dear Senator:

On July 22, 1982, Senators Helms and East introduced an amendment to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1982 which The American Legion commends to your serious attention. Specifically, this amendment would strike from S.2222 any authority to begin a program of amnesty for illegal aliens and we urge you in the strongest possible terms to cosponsor and support this amendment when it is debated on the floor.

For the last several years this organization has taken the view that regaining control over immigration into the United States — both legal and illegal — is of vital importance to nearly every facet of American life. This nation stands virtually alone among western nations in having failed even minimally to exercise its sovereign right to police its own borders.

The consequences of too many years of too little control have created an overwhelming popular sentiment that counsels reduced legal immigration, enforcement of tough new illegal immigration laws, and absolutely demands that those having already violated our immigration laws not be pardoned. Apart from the inherent wisdom of the American public, there are a variety of important policy considerations which if evaluated closely make amnesty very unwise.

From a public policy standpoint, The American Legion opposes amnesty because jobs held by illegals

For nearly twenty years we have envisioned such a bill as S. 2222: a bill that would finally give INS the legislative resources to regain control of our borders and our interior illegal alien problems. We have come so close, only to have the entire program threatened by this unbelievably broad form of amnesty. Such a provision would be totally devastating to the enforcement programs of the Immigration Service, and would certainly nullify the positive benefits that would accrue as a result of this bill.

We are with you all the way on this, Senator, and we wish you every success.

Sincerely,

Gordon J. MacDonald
Deputy Assistant Commissioner,
Border Patrol, retired

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should be made available to Americans, because new waves of illegals looking toward subsequent amnesties will be encouraged, because amnesty is unfair to those having awaited their legal turns, because general disrespect of law will ensue by legitimatizing the transgressions of violators, because the administrative burden of INS would be too great even if amnesty were a good idea, and because the cost to taxpayers as increased numbers become eligible for social welfare programs over the first four years will amount to over \$10 billion even according to the Administration. For all of these reasons we believe, and hope you will agree, that amnesty however truncated is inappropriate. This is particularly true now at a time in which the state of the national economy has seriously jeopardized our own citizens.

With the understanding that the Immigration Reform and Control Act is scheduled for consideration imminently, we ask that you consider the matter of amnesty thoughtfully. As always, your attention to the views of The American Legion are appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jack W. Flynt
National Commander

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