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Dan Stein Testifies Before House Subcommittee on Immigration Enforcement Methods

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Having Lost the Debate, Amnesty Advocates Are Attempting to Stop the Debate

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policies be held hostage to the demands of illegal aliens and cheap labor employers.
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A new report issued by the U.S.-Mexico Border Counties Coalition confirms research published by FAIR about the rising costs to local law enforcement resulting from illegal immigration. The Border Counties Coalition is comprised of officials from the 24 counties, covering four states, that abut Mexico. In a report issued on March 5, the Coalition estimates that the costs to local police, county jails, and prosecutors to deal with illegal alien criminal activities now amounts to \$192 million annually. More alarming, these costs have more than doubled since 1999.

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True Immigration Reform in Bite-Size Pieces

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In The News | *Immigration Policy for the Next Four Years*

This short opinion editorial by FAIR president Dan Stein, published in the online publication, The Latin American Advisor on February 21, looks ahead to the prospects for immigration reform for the next four years. It also addresses many of the concerns raised by FAIR members, as all of the leading presidential contenders are on record as supporting some form of amnesty for illegal aliens.

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Notes From the Field

As part of FAIR's strategy to promote immigration reform from the grassroots up, we now have three full-time field representatives (Susan Tully, Chris Chojnowski and Joyce Mucci) working with local activists who are winning battles in their cities and states. These victories are not only important in those communities, but serve as a model for what others can do to help bring about true immigration reform one city and state at a

time.

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82 Percent of Expected Increase Will Be Attributable to Immigration

One of the primary reasons FAIR was founded in 1979 was to address the harmful impact of rapid U.S. population growth attributable to mass immigration. A report by the Rockefeller Commission in 1972, when the U.S. population stood at about 200 million, concluded that there would be no benefit from further population growth. Today, the U.S. population has passed 300 million and that growth is projected to accelerate as a consequence of ongoing mass immigration. In February, the Pew Research Center estimated that our population will reach 438 million people by mid-century, and that 82 percent of that increase will be a direct result of immigration. The Pew findings are consistent with FAIR's own projections, published in 2006, that see U.S. population increasing to 445 million in 2050 — or even higher if amnesty is again adopted and our immigration door is opened wider.

Over the next 42 years, the foreign born population of the U.S. would increase from 36 million to 81 million, finds the Pew study. As a percentage of the total population, immigrants will increase from 12 percent today to 19 percent by 2050, surpassing levels set at the start of the 20th century. The Pew projections do not take into account the possible impact of a mass amnesty for current illegal aliens enabling them to petition for millions of relatives still residing outside the U.S. to join them.

Even as the nation faces the most massive increase in population in its history, there is no attention being paid by policy makers to the likely consequences. Unlike the rapid population growth that resulted from the baby boom of the mid-20th century, the looming massive population increase of the next four decades is purely discretionary and controllable.

The population growth projected by Pew and by FAIR's 2006 study represents the equivalent of the current population of Japan. In FAIR's view, responsible public policy demands that such a massive program of population growth be carefully evaluated. The American public has a right to know the likely consequences of an additional 137 million people on the nation's environment, resource base, economy, culture, national cohesion and other factors critical to our future.

It is important to consider that only 18 percent of the projected population increase will likely result from the replacement population. The remainder of that growth will result from our own government's refusal to establish and enforce immigration laws in the public interest.

Since its inception, FAIR has consistently called for a responsible assessment of the potential impact of our nation's immigration policies on future generations of Americans. In light of the latest projections of the Pew Research Center, FAIR is renewing its call for a carefully considered population policy for the United States.

Dan Stein Testifies Before House Subcommittee on Immigration Enforcement Methods

The modest increase in interior immigration enforcement over the past 18 months has led to the expected protests from the illegal alien advocacy network. Alleging isolated instances in which Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has been heavy-handed in its enforcement efforts, these groups are seeking to limit interior enforcement. The lack of any meaningful form of interior immigration enforcement contributed mightily to the growth of America's illegal population, as people knew that once they entered the country, little or no effort would be made to find them and remove them.

Testifying before the House Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security and International Law, on February 13, FAIR's president, Dan Stein, urged Congress to take corrective action when and if ICE does not follow proper procedure. However, he stressed the importance of maintaining a vigorous interior enforcement effort. FAIR has long argued that border security the first line of defense against illegal immigration cannot be the only line of defense. Stein rejected the idea that the remedy for the alleged isolated excesses by ICE should be curtailment of serious interior enforcement efforts.

Speaking on behalf of FAIR, Stein encouraged the subcommittee to continue to add detention facilities for illegal aliens apprehended by ICE and ending the so-called "catch and release" policy. Lacking adequate detention facilities to hold illegal aliens they have already apprehended, ICE has been forced to turn people loose with an order to appear for a hearing at some future date. An audit by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) found that over a three-year period ending in 2006, 280,987 deportable aliens were released due to lack of detention beds, and that some 600,000 aliens who had been ordered deported had absconded.

Stein also called upon "Congress and the national political leadership of this nation to demonstrate the political will to dramatically increase the enforcement of U.S. immigration laws in a manner consistent with credible deterrence." Increasing the likelihood of apprehension and detention would deter many potential illegal immigrants from making the expensive and often dangerous journey to the U.S., Stein told the subcommittee.

Maintaining a strong interior enforcement deterrent must remain a key component of our strategy to combat illegal immigration. "Stepped up interior enforcement, when combined with the aggressive enforcement of employer sanctions, dramatically increased detention space, and streamlined removal proceedings will achieve the deterrence that will encourage most illegal aliens to return home," testified Stein.

While recognizing that deportation alone cannot solve the illegal immigration crisis, it must remain as one of the tactics in the long-term effort to regain control of our immigration policies. In particular, Stein told the subcommittee, the Bush administration has not been fully utilizing deportation powers granted to it by Congress. Currently, the executive branch has the

authority to expedite the deportation of illegal aliens who have been in the country for less than two years, and FAIR has backed legislation that would allow for expedited removal of illegal aliens who have been here for less than five years.

Stein's testimony before the House is further repudiation of efforts by the illegal alien advocacy network to discredit FAIR. Since FAIR was founded in 1979, the organization has been invited to present congressional testimony on every aspect of the immigration issue some 100 times. FAIR is proud of the fact that no organization representing the public interest in the immigration debate has presented congressional testimony more often than ours.

GAO Finds Real Holes in the Virtual Fence

Ever since Congress and the Bush administration agreed to construct hundreds of miles of security fencing along our southern border, immigration enforcement opponents have worked diligently to ensure that it gets built as slowly as possible, if at all. Earlier this year, we reported about provisions in the 2008 Omnibus Appropriations bill that will hamper further construction. There has also been talk from some congressional leaders of substituting “virtual fencing” for the actual fencing called for in the 2006 legislation.

A new report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reveals that virtual fencing may be virtually useless in our efforts to stop real illegal aliens and, potentially, real terrorists who attempt to enter our country. Moreover, the GAO concluded that \$20.6 million spent to construct virtual fencing along the Arizona border has turned out to be an actual waste of taxpayer money. Because of problems with the first 28-mile segment, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) announced that completion of the first phase of the technological initiative to secure the border will be delayed from late 2008 until 2011.

The Boeing Corporation was contracted in 2006 to implement a series of nine security towers equipped with night vision cameras, radar and sensors, along with a variety of communications systems and software to monitor activities along large stretches of the border. The technology was supposed to have been in place by June 2007, but the software system failed to distribute the information gathered by the detection devices. In December, Boeing submitted plans to CBP that were supposed to fix these problems. CBP accepted these “fixes” and began training personnel on the system’s use on February 22, just five days before the GAO reported that the virtual fence did not work.

In response, the CBP conceded that they do not expect the virtual fence to substantially improve the Border Patrol’s ability to capture illegal border crossers. Rather — in the virtual reality that exists only inside the Beltway — the value of the failed project is expected to be a lesson learned. The GAO was a little more blunt about the lessons learned. The virtual fence “was never what [the Border Patrol] wanted, it never will be. They’re going to have to replace all the equipment,” Richard Stana, GAO’s director of Homeland Security and Justice Issues told Congress.

In his testimony before Congress in March, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff argued that the GAO’s conclusions about the virtual fence were overstated. Chertoff assured Congress and the public that Boeing would be absorbing the costs associated with the system’s defects.

FAIR has supported the use of technology that has been proven to work to help monitor activities in more remote areas of the border. However, we have long contended that technology should complement, not replace, actual fencing and manpower. Real fencing, where it is in place along our borders, has proven to be highly effective in controlling illegal entries.

But even when technology works as it is supposed to, it is useless without adequate manpower and equipment to apprehend illegal border crossers when they are detected.

Having Lost the Debate, Amnesty Advocates Are Attempting to Stop the Debate

The American public spoke loudly and clearly in 2007 when they overwhelmingly rejected the idea of granting amnesty to millions of illegal aliens and opening the floodgates to millions more foreign workers. Despite the best efforts of the Bush White House and the Senate leadership to avoid one, we had a debate about what needs to be done to regain control of our immigration policies. After hearing all sides, the American people said no to amnesty and no to more guest workers.

The American public said yes to the policy proposals offered by FAIR and others advocating sensible immigration reform driven by the needs and concerns of the American people. They said yes to border enforcement, worksite enforcement, local cooperation with federal immigration authorities, and an end to family chain migration, but unfortunately the Bush Administration and the Senate leadership insisted that those policies be held hostage to the demands of illegal aliens and cheap labor employers.

Having failed to convince the American people of the wisdom or fairness of granting amnesty to millions of people who broke our laws, the illegal alien advocacy network has now launched a vitriolic campaign to try to discredit everyone and anyone who stands in their way. Immediately following the defeat of the Bush-Kennedy bill last summer, the coalition of groups promoting amnesty for illegal aliens began ascribing their loss to a “wave of hate.” For example, one of the principle web sites attempting to quash free speech about immigration wildly charges that 40 million Americans are members of groups that promote “hate” against immigrants merely by advocating that laws against illegal immigration be enforced.

Labeling just about every argument in favor of enforcing U.S. immigration laws as “hate speech,” this coalition has been waging a relentless campaign to curtail free speech. Along with talk radio — which played a prominent role in informing the American public about what was being proposed in Washington — and high profile TV news personalities like CNN’s Lou Dobbs and Glenn Beck, FAIR has found itself squarely in the crosshairs of this very nasty campaign.

Led by the National Council of La Raza, a corporate-funded ethnic interest advocacy group, a coalition of self-described civil rights organizations have launched web sites and met with media executives in an effort to get them to keep FAIR from appearing on news programs. They are also urging the networks to muzzle some of their own most outspoken critics of current immigration policies and efforts to institute amnesty, such as Dobbs and Beck.

As Americans who believe that sound immigration policies are critical to our nation’s future success, and who have chosen to work with FAIR to help bring about sensible immigration reform, you deserve to know that FAIR is responding vigorously to the baseless charges that are being leveled against our organization and millions of concerned citizens. FAIR has prepared a

comprehensive response to these attacks against our organization which can be found on our web site, www.fairus.org.

The Edith Blodgett Public Relations Center

Thanks to a generous contribution from FAIR Board member and longtime supporter, Edith Blodgett, FAIR is pleased to introduce the new Edith Blodgett Public Relations Center.

FAIR's number of electronic media interviews has increased dramatically over the past year. In particular, our relationship with talk radio has exploded and the demand for multiple interviews is now a daily occurrence. This Center will enhance our already enormously successful media outreach program, allowing us to increase both the reach of our message and the speed at which we can get it out to the public.

We located this Center in our new headquarters at 25 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. in Washington, D.C. to take full advantage of the Capitol Hill location and the mounting primacy of the immigration issue. It is equipped with broadcast standard technology that allows for radio phone interviews on high quality ISDN lines. This Center will also serve as a remote studio facility for talk show hosts from around the nation broadcasting live from Washington and a professional staging area for television interviews.

With the addition of the Edith Blodgett Public Relations Center, FAIR will solidify its position as the preeminent public voice for meaningful immigration reform.

Border Counties Face Mounting Law Enforcement Costs as a Result of Unchecked Illegal Immigration

A new report issued by the U.S.-Mexico Border Counties Coalition confirms research published by FAIR about the rising costs to local law enforcement resulting from illegal immigration. The Border Counties Coalition is comprised of officials from the 24 counties, covering four states, that abut Mexico. In a report issued on March 5, the Coalition estimates that the costs to local police, county jails, and prosecutors to deal with illegal alien criminal activities now amounts to \$192 million annually. More alarming, these costs have more than doubled since 1999.

Over the past eight years, law enforcement related costs to border counties totaled about \$1.2 billion. Nearly all of these costs are being absorbed by the counties themselves, complains the Coalition. In 2007, the 24 border counties received a paltry \$4.7 million under the federal State Criminal Alien Assistance Program to offset these expenses.

Excluding affluent San Diego County, the other 23 counties that stretch from California to Texas are collectively the poorest in the nation. According to the Coalition, more than 21 percent of residents receive some form of public assistance, and 19 of the counties have per capita incomes of less than \$21,000 annually. The money used to pay for illegal immigration-related law enforcement costs is draining funds that are needed to provide other important services to residents of this impoverished region, claims the Coalition.

In 2004 and 2005, FAIR issued reports on the costs of illegal immigration in California, Arizona and Texas, three of the four states that share a border with Mexico. According to those reports, the combined cost of incarcerating criminal illegal aliens in those states (as opposed to just the counties directly along the border), amounted to more than \$1.6 billion a year.

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Indiana

Last month we reported that the Indiana State Senate approved legislation that would revoke the business license of employers who are caught hiring illegal aliens. In late February, the state's House followed suit by approving its own version of the bill. The House bill is limited to sanctions against employers, while the Senate bill also bars illegal aliens from access to non-essential state services and benefit. The two bills are headed to a conference committee to resolve the differences, but it appears likely that Indiana will soon join a growing number of states that are cracking down on employers.

Utah

Both houses of the Utah legislature overwhelmingly approved a bill that would make it more difficult for illegal aliens to work and collect benefits in the state. The bill holds Utah employers responsible for verifying the employment status of the workers they hire. A unique feature of the legislation also prevents employers from evading responsibility by hiring subcontractors. Under the bill, subcontractors would be required to provide affidavits certifying that their workers are all legal residents. Gov. Jon Huntsman is expected to sign the bill, which will take effect in July 2009.

Idaho

When people think of Idaho, they think about potatoes, not illegal immigrants. But potatoes and other agricultural products are drawing a growing number of illegal aliens to the state and local officials have determined that something needs to be done to turn off the magnet. By a unanimous vote, the Idaho State Senate approved a bill that would require all driver's license applicants to prove legal residence in the U.S.

Arizona

Arizona's state law punishing employers who hire illegal aliens is working. Two months after it went into effect, illegal aliens are reported to be leaving the state in large numbers either heading to states with more lenient policies, or returning home. The Arizona policy was authored by State Rep. Russell Pearce, who worked closely with FAIR and the Immigration Reform Law Institute (IRLI). Evidence of the exodus of illegal aliens comes from a variety of sources. One Phoenix school district reported the departure of 500 students since January, as they and their families left the area.

Virginia

A local ordinance in Prince William County, Virginia, allowing police to investigate the immigration status of people stopped for other offenses went into effect on March 3. This model ordinance, which has withstood challenges from illegal alien advocacy groups, will provide an example of how local police can work effectively with federal immigration authorities. As the measure went into effect, authorities noted fewer people congregating on the streets seeking day labor.

True Immigration Reform in Bite-Size Pieces

When the supporters of the Bush-Kennedy legislation in the Senate failed to pass a sweeping amnesty last summer, they turned to a strategy of passing amnesty piece by piece. That strategy failed, when the American public learned of their efforts through the work of FAIR and the media.

Stealing a page from the opposition's playbook, a coalition of pro-enforcement senators announced an effort to enact sensible immigration enforcement legislation in bite-size pieces. Led by Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), this group of legislators announced the introduction of ten immigration enforcement bills, each of which would be considered on its own merits. The package of bills covers a variety of needed enforcement reforms, many of which the backers of the amnesty proposal pledged to support as part of the so-called comprehensive bill. The pro-enforcement senators announced the introduction of these bills at a March 5th Capitol Hill news conference, billed as an effort to demonstrate to the American public that they have not forgotten about the importance of regaining control of our immigration policies.

Because the content of many of the bills has already been considered in previous legislation, Sen. Sessions announced plans to send them to Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) under a procedure known as Rule 14. Rule 14 allows bills to bypass the committees and go directly to the floor for a vote at the discretion of the majority leader.

The bite-size enforcement bills cover: 1) employment verification; 2) setting a firm deadline for completion of the border fence; 3) denial of federal money for new local police in jurisdictions that have declared themselves sanctuaries for illegal aliens; 4) discouraging states from issuing driver's licenses to illegal aliens by withholding federal highway dollars; 5) stationing National Guard along the border; and 6) sanctioning governments that refuse to repatriate deportees.

The individual enforcement bills all include reforms that FAIR has backed for years and include language that our government relations department helped draft. The strategy employed by Sen. Sessions is a sound one. Virtually every member of the Senate is on record as supporting all or most of the bills introduced on March 5. What Sen. Sessions has done is detach the non-controversial elements of so-called comprehensive immigration reform from the controversial ones that would have granted amnesty to millions of illegal aliens and opened the doors to millions more foreign workers. In doing so, he will force the Senate leadership to demonstrate whether their expressions of support for enforcement were genuine or merely a ploy to enact an unpopular amnesty and guest worker program.

In The News

Immigration Policy for the Next Four Years

This short opinion editorial by FAIR president Dan Stein, published in the online publication, The Latin American Advisor on February 21, looks ahead to the prospects for immigration reform for the next four years. It also addresses many of the concerns raised by FAIR members, as all of the leading presidential contenders are on record as supporting some form of amnesty for illegal aliens.

Like the current occupant of the White House, whoever assumes the presidency next January will be personally committed to the idea of granting amnesty to millions of illegal aliens living here. While we will have a new president, the opposition of the American public to amnesty which has thwarted President Bush's efforts will likely grow in intensity.

The new president will be faced with a daunting set of challenges: Resolve the war in Iraq, curb runaway budget and trade deficits, rein in soaring energy costs, and address the mortgage crisis. Compounding these formidable tasks is the likelihood that the new president will be handed an economy that is in recession, along with rising unemployment. The last thing the country will be in the mood for is a massive and budget-busting amnesty program, coupled with new guest worker programs.

While neither Obama, nor Clinton, nor McCain want to crackdown on employers who hire illegal aliens, economic conditions may force their hands. Even if Washington politicians continue to drag their feet, we are apt to see more and more states adopt their own policies to punish scofflaw employers and limit benefits and services to illegal aliens.

Notwithstanding who is elected in November, to most Americans, immigration reform means fulfilling broken promises to enforce our laws, protecting jobs and public resources, not cutting deals with the people who broke our laws.

Notes From the Field

As part of FAIR's strategy to promote immigration reform from the grassroots up, we now have three full-time field representatives (Susan Tully, Chris Chojnowski and Joyce Mucci) working with local activists who are winning battles in their cities and states. These victories are not only important in those communities, but serve as a model for what others can do to help bring about true immigration reform one city and state at a time.

In October, San Antonio activist Freeman Sawyer learned of the city council's plan to establish a publicly funded day labor center. Instead of sitting on his hands, Freeman called FAIR and together we worked to stop the plan. We immediately suggested that Freeman get the plans for the day labor center. After some perseverance Freeman and a group of local activists succeeded. With this information, they were able to mount pressure to halt the project through direct contact with local officials and by leaking information to the media. On three occasions, the matter was removed from the council's agenda, until finally it was withdrawn all together. Congratulations to Freeman and the local San Antonio immigration reform activists for demonstrating that you can, indeed, fight city hall.

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Local activists in Jupiter, Florida have also been waging a long-running battle to stop construction of a day labor center. Working with FAIR and the Immigration Reform Law Institute (IRLI), they are making headway. The tenacity of Floridians for Immigration Enforcement (FLIMEN) has drawn the attention of Florida politicians. As a result of FLIMEN's efforts, State Rep. Gayle Harrell has introduced a bill in the legislature that would bar public funding of day labor centers anywhere in Florida. Rep. Harrell was joined by some 200 FLIMEN activists in Jupiter on March 1, to help stop the day labor center.

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After the disaster of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Mississippians began to notice the real impact that illegal immigration was having on their state, as many reconstruction jobs began going to illegal aliens. We identified local activists who were willing to roll up their sleeves and get to work to make changes, and Mississippi Federation for Immigration Reform and Enforcement (MFIRE) was founded with FAIR's help. At FAIR's suggestion, MFIRE asked State Auditor Phil Bryant to report on the impact of illegal immigration in Mississippi. Two years later, MFIRE can point to real progress. As a result of their activism and FAIR's assistance, they have managed to get five real immigration reform bills before the State House of Representatives.