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## Hemphill: Immigration bill won't be enforced

By Alan Hemphill

June 21, 2007

President Bush wants the Senate to continue trying to get a comprehensive immigration bill to his desk.

Stick a fork in it — it's done. The bill was worse than enforcing existing laws — try enforcing them first. If there are terrible inequities, then a series of smaller and more understandable bills can address those specific problems.

Let each part of the immigration problem sink or swim on its own. Trying to solve a major 30-year-old international problem in a single bill, with the intent to push it through quickly before the content could be debated, was too much to swallow — even for a public enthralled with Paris Hilton.

The answer is: 7,514. The question was: How many days have passed since the federal government promised, in writing, to close the borders through the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill of Nov. 6, 1986? That is through the last term of Ronald Reagan, the one term of George H. W. Bush, the two terms of Bill Clinton, and through most of the two terms of George W. Bush.

That is through the solidly Democrat Congress before the Republican Revolution, through the Republican Revolution that took both houses of Congress in 1994, and through the newly established Democrat Congress. That bill also said that the federal government would strictly enforce the hiring practices of employers.

The federal government has had 7,514 new chances to do what they promised on Nov. 6, 1986. Now the president asks us to reset the clock and give government a new chance to do what they said they would do 7,514 times before.

When they made the last promise, legislators estimated that they would have to grant one million citizenship papers, because, they promised, the applicants would have to undergo background checks, pay a financial penalty, pay back taxes, study English and civics ...you know the drill.

Suddenly, the feds were faced with not just one million applicants, but 2.8 million, and the feds did what they do best — they folded.

As a result of 7,501 days of benign neglect, both the president and the Congress face somewhere between 12 million and 20 million potential new citizens. If they were overwhelmed by 2.8 million applicants, they now beg for an opportunity to face the logistics of as many as 20 million applicants.

One of the great senators has his name on the existing bill — former Senator Alan Simpson, R-Wyo. It didn't take him long to understand that he was snookered, and he said so when he testified on this Kennedy-McCain Bill.

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Today, June 21, marks 7,514 days. The Simpson-Mazzoli Bill remains on the books every day, until something is passed that supersedes it. It could have been enforced yesterday, and it can be enforced tomorrow.

It won't be enforced tomorrow, and the proposed Immigration Reform Bill of 2007 will not be enforced either – if it ever gets resurrected and placed on the president's desk.

How do I know? Let me count the ways – 7,514, 7,515, 7,516 ...

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