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***"Freedom of the Press belongs to those who own one."***

*A. J. Liebling of the New Yorker*

January 24, 2004



# Commentary

## The Bush Immigration Proposal -- Part 1

**A**s the only Anglo standing in line one early morning in Escondido to vouch for two illegal aliens in 1986 in order to get them the amnesty offered by the Reagan Administration, I bring a history to this discussion of the Bush Administration Immigration Proposal.

The premise of Reagan's amnesty program was that our government would grant the opportunity for full citizenship to those illegal aliens – and even let them bring their immediate families – who could show, through housing receipts and utility bills, that they had lived here successfully for several years. To avoid having that amnesty action serve as a magnet for a flood of immigrants seeking future citizenship, we were told the government would crack down hard on the border.

You can see how well the government kept that promise. Hospitals in every state along the border with Mexico flirt with bankruptcy in providing care for illegals, many of whom come across the border just days before delivering taxpayer-delivered babies who will immediately become American citizens. That makes the mother and immediate family also eligible for American citizenship.

The Bush proposal looks very much like amnesty under another name. It is proposed that illegal aliens, millions of them, register and work for three years without government hassle. The newly documented workers can then apply for a second document to work for another three years.

It is then hoped, and it is only a hope, that the workers and their families will return to Mexico. Common sense tells me that workers who have already lived here illegally for years before becoming documented, and have enjoyed our country with all of its opportunities for six years as a documented worker, will not rush back to the economically backward, drug-kingpin-dominated country of Mexico.

Few of the approximately eight million existing workers will return to Mexico, and there is nothing in the plan to shut off the continuing flow of new workers coming across the borders. In the two years since 9/11, fewer than 1,000 new Border Patrol agents have been hired for the thousands of miles of north and south borders. Tonight alone, many more new illegal aliens will cross the southern border than new agents have been hired in two years.

This is a losing proposition so long as the borders are porous – and it looks like they will continue to be porous. In effect, the President has declared victory while far behind, and the game continues with no chance of his team scoring, while the Mexicans are running up the score.

I guess that the President has scored a political coup by stealing the subject away from the Democrats, much as he has done with education, but his solutions, both in education and in immigration have been toothless rhetoric.

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