

June 11, 2007      Although action in the United States Senate this week has slowed passage of the amnesty bill, it is not yet dead as President Bush remains committed to this approach. That is why the President recently suggested that those of us who oppose amnesty for illegal immigrants are unpatriotic. Those of us who strongly oppose the new immigration reform bill before the Senate “don't want to do what's right for America ,” the president said. I reject that assessment as unfair and inaccurate. Supporters of the amnesty bill like to claim that border protection is their first priority. But if enforcement of our borders is the highest priority, certainly a much shorter bill could have been written. Even better, why not enforce existing laws? According to our Constitution, Congress makes the laws that the executive branch is to enforce. The rush to pass this new law seems to obfuscate this simple fact. There are plenty of laws already in place, so it seems sensible to largely solve this problem without new laws. To make matters worse, as I wrote in a recent column, some 120 of our best trained border guards are going to be sent to Iraq to help them with border enforcement! In addition, National Guard troops participating in Operation Jump Start on the Mexican border are scheduled to also be sent to Iraq and Afghanistan . This legislation purports to crack down hard at our borders, but as we have learned time and time again, you cannot address enforcement until you address incentives. That is why you cannot have border security with an amnesty program in place: the incentive of amnesty undermines any crack-down on border protection and in fact just makes work for our Border Patrol all the more difficult. Incentives in place to those who would come to the United States illegally will remain in place if this legislation is passed. Illegal immigrants will still receive federal assistance and free medical care and their children will still gain automatic citizenship after this bill is passed. We need to face the fact that securing our borders means more than legislation, or fences, or even more Border Patrol. It means removing incentives for people to come to the US illegally in the first place. That is why I will once again introduce an amendment to the Constitution to end birthright citizenship this coming week. Although the “reform” of immigration in the amnesty bill is enough to cause alarm, other highly troubling provisions are tucked away that will serve to undermine our sovereignty and weaken our civil liberties. According to the most recent version of the Senate bill, the misnamed Security and Prosperity Partnership for North America is to be “accelerated.” It seems ironic that a project aiming to actually weaken US borders with Mexico and Canada would be added into a bill that purports to toughen border controls. Also, this bill will bring us closer to a national ID card, which without a doubt runs counter to American values and history and will punish American citizens without doing much to counter those who would come here illegally. I strongly disagree with the president that opposing this legislation is unpatriotic. I believe we have an obligation to reject any legislation that promises amnesty to those here illegally, and that undermines the sovereignty and privacy of American citizens.