

## A sellout of our unemployed

by Patrick\_Buchanan

By the choices we make we define ourselves. We reveal our biases and beliefs. And so, too, do our institutions.

In writing the \$789 billion stimulus bill, Congress revealed that, for all its "Buy American" blather, it does not truly put America first. It does not believe that 10 million jobless Americans, in the country their fathers built, should receive any preference in hiring 12 million to 20 million illegal aliens who broke into this country and owe her no loyalty, allegiance or love.

Is this a slur on the patriotism of some of our congressmen? You betcha.

What other conclusion can one reach after Congress refused to require that employers on construction projects, paid for by U.S. tax dollars in the stimulus bill, verify that their workers are Americans?

For that is precisely what Congress did.

The first paragraph of the front-page story in USA Today says it all. "Los Angeles â€” Tens of thousands of jobs created by the economic stimulus law could end up filled by illegal immigrants, particularly in big states like California where undocumented workers are heavily represented in construction, experts on both sides of the issue say."

According to the Center for Immigration Studies, illegal aliens will take 300,000 of the 2 million construction jobs to be created by the stimulus bill. The CIS figure is based on Census Bureau estimates that 15 percent of all construction workers are illegal aliens or immigrants who are not authorized to work in the United States.

Robert Rector of Heritage Foundation concurs with the figures on the number of jobs Congress just voted to give to non-Americans.

"Without specific mechanisms to ensure that workers are U.S. citizens or legally authorized to work, it is likely that 15 percent of these workers, or 300,000, would be illegal immigrants."

Other experts put the figure far higher than 15 percent, and certainly higher in California and other Southwestern states, where illegals tend to congregate.

In taking these jobs, illegals will be shouldering aside unemployed Americans. Yet Congress could have, with one vote, guaranteed that virtually every job paid for by U.S. taxpayers would go to U.S. workers.

How? By mandating that all beneficiaries of stimulus money use the E-Verify program of the Department of Homeland Security, which lets employers check the validity of the Social Security number of all new hires. E-Verify is available on a voluntary basis. It is simple, swift and easy to use.

Indeed, E-Verify is becoming standard operating procedure for U.S. businesses that wish to obey the law. According to NumbersUSA, U.S. businesses have used E-Verify in 3 million inquiries this year alone. That is almost half the total of 6.6 million inquiries for all of 2008 and five times the rate of use in 2007.

E-Verify is a smashing success with an accuracy rate of over 99 percent that holds out promise of a day when every employer in America will be able to ensure that every employee is an American or someone authorized to work here. At its rising rate of use, one-fourth to one-third of all new hires could soon be checked by E-Verify.

Isn't this what we all want, what we have all sought — an easy, verifiable, non-intrusive, inexpensive way for businesses to assure that those they hire are in our country legally?

No, it is not. For Tuesday night, the Senate voted to strip away this protection of American workers from the unfair competition of illegal aliens.

The Senate voted 50 to 47 to end E-Verify in six months, when current funding runs out. Sen. Jeff Sessions' proposal to give this successful program five more years was rejected 50 to 47.

Republicans and seven Democrats voted to save E-Verify. But only Democrats voted to kill it.

How did Harry Reid kill the E-Verify provision that was in the House version of the stimulus package? The Senate was not even allowed to vote on it. And when the two bills were reconciled in the Pelosi-Reid conference, E-Verify disappeared.

This was a huge victory for La Raza and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, whose lobbyists have labored long to ensure that their member companies pay no price for dumping U.S. workers and hiring illegal aliens.

Yet, this battle is not over. If Americans understand that the Pelosi-Reid Democrats have no problem with illegal aliens taking jobs from unemployed Americans, that party can be made to pay a price in 2010.

As of today, there exists a Republican-Blue Dog Democrat coalition in both houses that is serious about putting our country and countrymen first, be it on spending bills or trade measures. This is a foundation to build on.

E-Verify is not dead. For the Reid-Pelosi-Obama Left cannot survive the perception that it is aiding and abetting illegal aliens in taking the jobs of unemployed Americans.

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