

Deal is morally suspect

by The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

There is developing in some quarters a sort of hold-your-nose acceptance of the so-called "grand bargain" immigration deal worked out between some U.S. senators and the White House. The rationale, even if not verbalized quite as plainly, is this: Because this deal offers a path to legal residency for the 12 million or so illegal immigrants already here, everyone should just swallow hard and urge passage of this legislation. It is faulty reasoning. This is no "grand bargain." It is a Faustian one. Some good may undoubtedly be achieved, but, as a whole, the deal is morally suspect.

It creates a path that the migrants already here have earned - for humanity's sake and by virtue of sweat and their sizable contribution to the economy - but also creates a new underclass, those "temporary" guest workers.

These workers will be asked to work for two years and to leave for one before being allowed to return, allowing up to six years of guest worker status. And after that, they don't get to stay. In other words, as we've said before, we're telling them that they are not good enough to be one of us, only to serve us. This is morally unacceptable. It is also impractical. It just won't work. Those guest workers won't be leaving. This arrangement makes it very likely that both workers and employers will ignore the law. Presto, a few years from now, we'll be talking about the new underclass living in the new shadows that this legislation will create.

Also under the heading of morally unacceptable: Replacing the system of admission because of family ties for one based on points for education and speaking English. This, too, will simply be incentive for families to reunite no matter what the law says. They are coming now without documents because of the backlog. Surely, such practical considerations as whether the provisions will work should be a significant factor as the Senate debates the legislation this week.

Congress can do better.

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