

And Here It Comes-A Legislative Summary

It didn't take long coming...enforcement is back, with a vengeance. Since the walkout on a recent Thursday night, the Republican block in the Senate has been looking for a way to match 'fire with fire' with the Democrats. It all started with a dispute over a vote to grant additional amnesty to immigrants in the Senate which caused a furor, resulting in the opponents of the bill storming out of that house of Congress.

Now, the Department of Homeland Security has announced that it intends to instigate a 'no-match' program in which Social Security numbers volunteered by employees to prospective employers either match or that the ones failing to provide correct numbers be fired. It is only the first step in enforcement. There have been talks of raids.

However, on the heels of that atmosphere, Ag Jobs is still up in the air. "Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., is plowing ahead and says that she will try this fall to include the farmworker proposal, which would legalize an estimated 1.5 million farmworkers, to a major farm programs bill."¹

Then there's the so-called Dream Act that would legitimize thousands of children of illegals in this country. Would it be possible to consider it apart from the Ag Jobs bill? Who knows? That will largely depend on who proposes it and why in Congress.

Only now, the political climate in Washington is insipid at a time when cool heads should be prevailing, especially in light that harvest time is quickly approaching for U.S. agriculture.

Even that stalwart of amnesty, the Republican Senator from South Carolina, has offered a program to stop the flow of illegals into the country. Dubbed 'Lindsey Grahamnesty' by his detractors because of his attempts to provide citizenship to immigrants, the senator has faced harsh criticism back in his home state recently and since back-peddled on his position, along with another in his party, Sen. John McCain of Arizona, whose Presidential campaign is in tatters now, largely because of his unpopular stand on the immigration debate.

As reported in the *New York Times*, in an article dated: 8/8/2007:

"The expected regulations would give employers a fixed period, perhaps up to 90 days, to resolve any discrepancies between identity information provided by their workers and the records of the Social Security Administration. If a worker's documents cannot be verified, employers would be required to fire them or risk up to \$10,000 in fines for knowingly hiring illegal immigrants."²

So far, every avenue known to government has been traveled by legislators except the courts. Will a Federal Court intervene next, or the Supreme Court receive papers for consideration? If so, look for it to come from California and the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, where the vast majority of migrant labor is represented.

¹"Republicans hardening stance on immigration," by Carolyn Lochhead, San Francisco Chronicle Washington Bureau – Saturday, August 4, 2007.

Link: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/08/04/MNJ7RCGOU1.DTL>

²“U.S. Readies Tough Rules on Employers of Immigrants,” by Julia Preston, The New York Times – August 8, 2007.

Link: <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/08/washington/08cnd-immig.html?hp>