OTHER VIEWS

Time is now to firm up border policy

Editor's note: *Arizona Congressman J.D. Hayworth is circulating this letter to President Bush for House colleagues to co-sign. The letter will be sent to the White House on Wednesday, the day after Mexican President Vicente Fox's visit to Arizona.*

October 28, 2003

The President
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

We write to urge you to seize the opportunity during your upcoming discussions with Mexican President Vicente Fox to make clear this nation's determination to establish and enforce an immigration policy that celebrates our immigrant heritage, secures our borders, draws a bright line between legal and illegal aliens, and rejects any and all forms of amnesty.

We trust and urge that any agreement reached during these discussions and any implementing proposals you may subsequently bring to Congress will honor what we consider to be bedrock principles of a sane, effective and productive immigration policy:

■ Our national security against terrorism must be built on secure borders, and we intend to invest whatever manpower and technological resources are required to close our borders to terrorists, drug smugglers and illegal aliens;

■ Our national allegiance is to one indivisible nation, and we will not allow or condone the balkanization of the United States of America but instead embrace efforts to help documented newcomers become part of the America family;

■ Our core belief that reverence for the laws must be, as Lincoln said, the "political religion of the nation," which means we can no longer blur the line between legal and illegal immigration and we must vigorously enforce all our immigration laws;

■ The nation's economic security and that of our workers, particularly low-income and underemployed Americans, must not be undercut by exploited, unskilled illegal alien workers;

Rep. J.D. Hayworth

■ Our national treasure is of, by, and for Americans — native or nationalized, but in all cases legal citizens — and should not be further depleted to aid, abet, or encourage persons who are here illegally;

■ Our previous experiments with direct or indirect amnesty have failed, resulting in more, not less, illegal immigration, because amnesty rewards lawbreakers and discriminates against those who seek legal entry into this country; therefore, every form and vestige of amnesty must be rooted out of federal laws, regulations and policies.

We also believe you must make clear to President Fox that we expect Mexico to be an integral part of this effort. For far too long Mexico has acted more as an accomplice in illegal immigration than a partner in preventing it. And while we sympathize with Mexico's problems — its statist economy, hugely inefficient public sector, laws that limit foreign investment and inability to create enough jobs for its people, etc. — it nonetheless has a responsibility to help control this runaway problem that is largely of its own making.

If the Mexican government can't or won't make necessary and long-overdue changes to provide economic opportunity for its own people, then it should at least help pay for the burden on the American taxpayer that it has created and, indeed, encouraged.

By reaffirming our fidelity to these self-evident truths, we can seize this moment of opportunity to resolve one of the primary and growing threats to our nation's future. We urge you to act now to rescue an immigration policy that is failing the American people, imposing enormous costs on our economy, and leaving us more vulnerable to terrorism.

Sincerely,

Rep. J.D. Hayworth