

ANOTHER NAME FOR AN AMNESTY

By Don Feder

President George W. Bush has made many contributions to American security. The proposal he unveiled yesterday to deal with illegal immigrants isn't one of them. If enacted, it would reward criminals, encourage future law-breaking, promote the loss of national identity and increase the sense of alienation of the middle class.

To put it bluntly: It is an election-year vote buying scheme that betrays the president's core constituency in a bid to shamelessly pander to Hispanic votes.

In his remarks announcing this bold, policy initiative, Mr. Bush used the logic liberals offer to justify their nation-without-borders vision.

“Out of common sense and fairness, our laws should allow *willing workers* to enter our country and fill jobs that Americans are not filling,” the president declared. Bush painted a picture of wetback Horatio Algiers.

“Many undocumented workers have walked mile after mile through the heat of the day and the cold of the night. Some have risked their lives” to come here, the president emoted.

The Bush plan would allow “undocumented workers” (as the president, adopting politically correct terminology, calls them) to apply for guest worker status. The only requirement is that they’re currently holding a job no American wants. The same provision will be used to import more “guest workers” from South of the border.

And how do we know the position is one gringos shun? Take an employer’s word for it? Let’s see, Bob -- who owns a restaurant in San Diego -- wants someone who’s willing to wash dishes for long hours, under wretched conditions, for a pittance. Moreover, he’d like a docile worker – a peon, if you know what I mean.

Bob looks around. Nope, Americans aren’t clamoring for this plum position. But it seems Juan in Tiajuana is eager to accept the assignment. Hey, we’ve matched a willing worker with a job Americans aren’t filling.

There are any number of flaws to this thinking (twisted logic). First, there are Americans – students, young people without much education, the poor who want out of the dependency trap -- looking for a start in life. But the kind of employers who yearn for immigrant labor don’t want them. They don’t want workers with ambition who will leave when something better comes along. They don’t want workers with pride who might complain

about dangerous conditions or violations of the labor law. They want peons to wash the dishes, pluck the chickens and do janitorial work at Wall Mart.

As a matter of fact, there's no such thing as a job Americans don't want. If you offer an American wage, you'll find Americans to take the position.

Those low-paying jobs that illegal immigrants take are actually taxpayer-subsidized positions. The illegal uses government services. (Proposition 187, overturned by a federal judge, was designed to stop that.) His children attend public schools. When he's too old and tired to work, he'll find a way to hitch a ride on the welfare gravy train, perhaps with forged documents.

Turning a blind eye to illegal immigration is a way of transferring employment costs from Corporate America to Middle America. Main Street understands this, which is why public opinion surveys invariably show the people overwhelmingly opposing amnesties. They won't be fooled by an amnesty called a guest-worker program.

We all also pay for illegal immigration in less tangible ways. Illegal immigrants augment the process of national dissolution. Existing in a Spanish-language milieu, they feel no need to learn English. They are

unlikely to learn anything about our history and heritage. Few of them will ever come to identify with this country.

We have no shortage of non-English speakers, of those ignorant of American history, of individuals whose loyalty is to a racial or ethnic tribe, instead of to the republic. We don't need to import more of it.

And what about importing criminals and terrorists? Under the Bush amnesty, uh – excuse me – guest worker program, how do we screen out threats to public safety and security risks, when illegals rush forward, forged documents in hand, to be “legalized”?

“Build it and they will come,” Kevin Costner was told in “Field of Dreams.” Each amnesty weaves a welcome mat to the scores clamoring for admittance to a land with a finite capacity to absorb them.

Our nation has an estimated 8 million to 11 million illegals. Their numbers grow by half a million annually. Amnesties send a signal to would-be border jumpers: If you can make it into the country and hang on for a few years, your status will be “adjusted.” You'll get a green card. Heck, you might even make it to citizenship – the real mother lodge of government benefits for the underclass.

That's what happened with our last amnesty in 1986. Said surge of compassion was supposed to take care of all of our problems. Roughly 2.8

million were admitted as legal immigrants. They in turn brought in 142,000 of their relations. (Another small problem.)

Between then and now, illegal immigration exploded – which is a matter of common (as opposed to political) sense. If we declared a general amnesty for rapists who haven't been apprehended, do you think that might encourage sex crimes?