



Written by [Jack Kerwick, Ph.D.](#) on May 23, 2013

## Amnesty Debunked: A Response to Michael Medved

In the May 21 edition of *Investor's Business Daily*, Michael Medved writes that "it's a healthy development if people *toiling* in this country want to become full participants in our national life and express their willingness to go through considerable effort and expense to legalize their status as Americans" (Emphasis added.)

Immediately, there are a couple of things to note here.

First, of all of the millions of illegal immigrants for whom Medved wants amnesty, some indeed spend much of their time "toiling." Many others, however, do not. In fact, many illegal immigrants receive all manner of welfare and social services courtesy of the American taxpayer.

Second, *saying* that illegal immigrants will have to do this or that in order to achieve legal status doesn't make it so. Resistance to amnesty stems precisely from the fact that there persists pervasive distrust of the government's word on pretty much everything. This is particularly the case among conservative-minded voters. After all, this is why they are conservative.

More specifically, though, many opponents of amnesty have heard this tune before, some 27 years ago, when the country's then three million "toiling" illegal immigrants were supplied with "a pathway to citizenship." The amnesty of 1986 only exacerbated the immigration issue. The amnesty of 2013, opponents know, promises to do the same.

Next, through a disingenuous act of sheer sophistry, Medved contends that opposition to amnesty is one and the same as opposition to all *legal* immigration. Obliterating the distinction between the lawful and the lawless, he states, "No one who truly supports legal immigration would stand in the way of millions who seek nothing more than to become legal immigrants" by paying penalties, "avoiding" welfare benefits, enduring background checks, and satisfying a number of other conditions contained in the Gang of Eight's bill.

With all due respect to the author, this argument is silly to the point of being offensive. It is akin to the argument that "no one who truly supports" traditional marriage would "stand in the way of millions" of homosexuals "who seek nothing more than" to become married, or "no one who truly supports" medicine would "stand in the way of millions" who want the right to self-medicate with heroin and cocaine.





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Furthermore, on Medved's own terms, that illegal immigrants will supposedly have to satisfy a variety of conditions in order to become legal is logically irrelevant. If one "who truly supports legal immigration" has no option but to endorse amnesty, then it shouldn't matter whether this "pathway to citizenship" consists of a thousand qualifications or none at all. According to Medved's logic, all that matters is that there exists a "pathway to citizenship."

Medved admits that "the biggest challenge to implementing" amnesty is "sorting through" the millions and millions of "human beings to distinguish those who deserve to stay from those who ought to go home."

Reread this slowly and then read it again. For decades the federal government has been either unwilling or unable to adhere to its complex set of immigration laws. This amnesty bill takes a relatively complex set of laws and renders it vastly more complex. So, the government either won't or can't do its job when its yoke is lighter. When, however, it is more burdensome, then — *then* — it will act efficiently and dutifully.

This is preposterous.

No less preposterous is Medved's claim that "stubborn opposition to a path to legal status ruins the best argument that conservatives could otherwise employ in efforts to win support from Latino, Asian, and African-American voters."

Pace Medved, amnesty is not a priority for most voters *of any racial background*. And it is most certainly not a priority for black voters! If anything, poll after poll shows that the majority of the country, irrespective of race or ethnicity, *rejects* Medved's and Rubio's "pathway to citizenship."

But even if the members of these non-white groups did want amnesty, there is absolutely no reason for anyone to think that by granting it Republicans would win them over. And there is every reason — namely, voting patterns from the years immediately preceding the amnesty of '86 to the present — for judging the amnesty of 2013 to be the death knell of GOP dominance.



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