



Written by [Wallis W. Wood](#) on June 28, 2013

## Marco Rubio's Big Immigration Mistake

What a sad transformation it's been to see Senator Marco Rubio go from being a Tea Party hero to an apologist for the Gang of Eight's immigration bill.

Back in 2010, Rubio was a handsome and articulate State Senator in Florida when he decided to run for the U.S. Senate. Doing so meant defying the Republican establishment's hand-picked selection, then-Governor Charlie Crist.



There were two make-or-break issues in the Republican primary that year. The first was Barack Obama's massively expensive stimulus program. Crist was so enamored of it that he actually agreed to have a photograph taken of him publicly embracing the President. We'll never know how many votes that hug cost him, but it was a bunch.

Rubio said that counting on federal handouts to create jobs was a huge mistake. He called instead for letting the free enterprise system work, by lowering taxes and reducing regulation. The voters made it clear which message they preferred.

The other issue that marked a sharp disagreement between the two candidates was immigration reform and, in particular, amnesty for the millions of people who were in this country illegally. Crist endorsed amnesty; Rubio, the son of immigrants from Cuba, said he was unalterably opposed to it. In speech after speech, Rubio repeated this warning in some form: If you grant amnesty in any form, you will destroy any chance we ever have of having a legal immigration system that works here in America.

It was those two stands, more than any others, that made Rubio a Tea Party favorite and led to his victory over his much more liberal opponent. Crist subsequently resigned from the Republican Party and joined the Democrats.

But since then, Rubio agreed to become one of four Republican members of the Senate's Gang of Eight. Since two of his Republican colleagues were John McCain of Arizona and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and the Democrat members included Chuck Schumer of New York and Robert Menendez of New Jersey, you won't be surprised to learn that the final agreement includes amnesty.

It was also apparent that a whole lot of horse-trading was going on behind the scenes to ensure passage of the bill. Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas), one of the Tea Party heroes who has *not* abandoned his opposition to the current immigration bill, castigated the ["laundry list of buyoffs"](#) that has been made to insure a favorable vote. These include:

- Diverting a chunk of the money for border security to Maine — a State that, so far as I know, has never had a problem with illegal immigrants hiking in from Canada — to win the support of Susan Collins, that State's Senator.
- Some special bequests for the seafood industry in Alaska, so that State's two Senators, Lisa Murkowski and Mark Begich, will get behind the bill.
- And in one of the smelliest deals of all, a \$1.5 billion jobs program, the price demanded by Vermont's



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socialist Senator Bernie Sanders for his support.

All of that helps explain why Cruz said, “Rarely do we see so transparently how votes in the Senate are bought and sold.” Oh yes we have, Senator. It’s just that in the past they were called “earmarks.”

After weeks of behind-the-scenes wheeling and dealing, the current immigration bill was finally made available for Senators to see on the afternoon of Friday, June 21. The Senate was expected to vote on some of its most important provisions just 72 hours later. Does the process remind you of the way ObamaCare was rushed through Congress?

No matter. The bill was approved Thursday by a vote of 68-32, followed by a ton of self-congratulation among the victorious Senators. The measure now goes to the House of Representatives, where it will face a much tougher battle.

If there’s any lesson we’ve learned over the recent past, it’s that we can’t trust a politician’s promise. Yet that’s exactly what this current measure does when it comes to protecting our borders. It calls for beginning the legalization process now and says that border protection will follow. “Trust us on this” is the refrain.

Are they crazy?

The proposal says that the border is “secure” when it catches or keeps out 90 percent of those who try to enter the country illegally. That’s far from perfect, but it’s sure a heck of a lot better than we’ve been doing.

The question is: Who decides when that goal is achieved? The current legislation calls for the President and his minions to make that determination. We’re supposed to trust the same folks who have screwed up on so many fronts for so long. That’s ridiculous.

Instead, Congress should be the branch that determines when our border is secure. Members of the House of Representatives are a lot more accountable to the voters than any President — especially a lame duck who won’t run for office again.

## **What This Bill Doesn’t Do**

There’s been a lot of talk about what this bill does, including all of the promises about tightening up our borders. But far more important is something it doesn’t do. In fact, it’s an issue that is almost never even mentioned in the immigration debate.

I’m referring to the absurdity of granting citizenship to each and every child who is born within our borders — no matter if the parents are here legally or not.

That’s right. It is the official policy of the U.S. government that any child, born in this country to illegal immigrants, automatically and immediately becomes a citizen of the United States.

Such infants are sometimes referred to as “anchor babies,” because their immediate and automatic citizenship is the “anchor” on which a host of other claims, from welfare to others’ citizenship, can be made.

On the face of it, this sounds patently absurd. How can a newborn baby be eligible for citizenship when his parents are not? Not merely *eligible*, mind you, but granted it automatically? The new citizen is immediately entitled to all the benefits that accompany citizenship: schooling, medical care, food stamps and other welfare, and a whole host of “public assistance.”



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This is not how it should be. Yes, it's true we are a nation of immigrants. But what a difference there is between this process and what our predecessors experienced. Many of us have grandparents or great-grandparents who overcame incredible obstacles to become citizens of this country. Before they were accepted, they had to pass a rigorous and demanding test. The questions they were asked and their answers had to be *in English*.

As an essential part of the process, every immigrant was required to renounce allegiance to the country he had left and to swear allegiance to his newly adopted home, the United States. And every new citizen was thrilled to do so.

There was a solemn ceremony, often conducted by a judge sitting high on a bench above them, issuing the oath of allegiance. Friends and family welcomed the new citizens with flag waving, hugs and tears, and enthusiastic applause.

That is what citizenship for an immigrant used to mean — and still does, for many adults who follow the rules. But today, we are required to grant the same privileges to anyone whose mother can sneak across our border a few hours before her baby is born. That is insane. And it must be changed, if we ever hope to regain control of our immigration policies.

Rubio recognizes that many of his supporters disagree with him on immigration. A [Rasmussen poll](#) says his support among conservatives has dropped 15 percent since February.

[Rubio admits](#) it's been difficult for him to hear "the growing anger in the voices of so many people who helped me get elected to the Senate and who I agree with on virtually every other issue."

Rubio, there's an easy solution here: Please come back to your base. Remember why so many of us hailed your triumph three years ago. And return to the principles that lead to your amazing victory.

As the son of (legal) immigrants and a proud Hispanic yourself, you are in a unique position to insist that *first we must secure our borders*. That's our right — and our obligation. And that we must end the absurdity of granting instant citizenship to anchor babies.

If you'll use your eloquence and enthusiasm to make sure we don't compromise here, you'll be doing a huge service to the country you love.

Until next time, keep some powder dry.

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