



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on September 15, 2010

Reid Pushes for Amnesty Through Defense Policy Bill

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid indicated his intent to attach an amendment to a defense policy bill that would virtually lead to amnesty. At a capitol news conference on Tuesday, Reid said that the legislation, known as the DREAM ACT, has been delayed for far too long.



The DREAM ACT provides a pathway to citizenship to any young person who attends college or enlists in the military. According to Fox News, "The young people must have come to the country when they were under 16 years of age and have been in the country five years. Those who join the military must serve at least two years and complete two years of college."

The legislation is intended to appease immigrant and Hispanic communities that have openly criticized President Obama for his failure to produce "comprehensive immigration reform," i.e., amnesty.

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The Obama administration has pushed hard for amnesty in the past two years, [under the guise of "comprehensive immigration reform."](#)

In May of this year, the National Commission on Financial Responsibility and Reform entered the debate. *The Hill* reported, "Democrats want immigration reform on the table as the White House fiscal commission examines ways to reduce deficits, saying there is a 'credible connection' between the issue and the country's fiscal situation. Service Employees International Union (SEIU) President Andy Stern and Rep. Xavier Becerra (Calif.), both Democrats on the bipartisan fiscal commission, said reforms giving the 12 million illegal immigrants in the United States a chance to stay in the U.S. legally could boost the economy and thereby help pay down the debt."

However, economists have produced evidence to the contrary. For example, in a study published by Harvard economists George Borjas and Lawrence Katz in 2005, they reported that illegal Mexican immigrants undercut wages for U.S.-born high-school dropouts by 8.2 percent from 1980 through 2000. The unemployment among unskilled, uneducated workers in America remains at 30 percent, in part because the influx of illegal immigrants forces out native workers. Kenyon College economists proved this when they conducted a 16-year study of the California nail-salon workforce. As reported in the study, the influx of Vietnamese immigrant women in the 1980s resulted in the loss of approximately 10,000 native-born workers. According to the Colorado Alliance for Immigration Reform, the loss of jobs for unskilled, native workers has resulted in spending nearly \$15 billion a year to provide welfare and assistance to the families of those unskilled, native workers. Likewise, increased costs result from the cost of incarcerating, providing medical services, and education to the illegal immigrants.

Yet despite the crises plaguing the American economy, Democrats continue to push for amnesty. In July,



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a controversial internal United States Citizenship and Immigration Services [memo](#) surfaced that would have provided amnesty to illegal immigrants by way of an executive order.

Reid's amendment is just the latest in a long line of attempts.

Republicans are opposed to the measure and accuse Reid of pushing this amendment as a political move since Reid is in a tough race in Nevada against Tea Party candidate Sharron Angle. Angle supports tougher immigration laws, and with a 25-percent Hispanic population in Nevada, Reid's DREAM ACT amendment appears to be a ploy for the Hispanic vote.

Jahan Vilcox, spokesperson for Nevada's Republican Party, responded to Reid's amendment. "Nevada voters will overwhelmingly reject these desperate political parlor games that could only come from a 28-year establishment Democrat seeking a fifth term in the U.S. Senate."

Reid blames the Republicans for the Obama administration's failure to pass immigration reform. "I've tried to. I've tried so very, very hard, but those Republicans we've had in the last Congress (who backed immigration reform) have left us."

Given a recent Quinnipiac University poll, however, such a hard stance against amnesty may bode well for the Republicans. According to the poll, 68 percent of Americans favor stricter enforcement of immigration laws over amnesty, while a mere 24 percent favor amnesty. Similarly 48 percent of Americans are opposed to the practice of granting automatic citizenship to newborns, as opposed to 45 percent that support the practice. Overall, the poll reports that 60 percent of Americans disapprove of President Obama's handling of immigration.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell has criticized Reid for the inclusion of the amnesty amendment, as well as the inclusion of a measure that would end "don't ask, don't tell," in the DREAM ACT, adding "needless controversy" to an important bill.

When asked whether Reid has secured the necessary votes to see the bill passed, he responded, "I sure hope so."



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