



Scott Walker Clarifies Position Against Amnesty for Illegals

During an interview with host Chris Wallace on *Fox News Sunday* on March 1, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker said he does not believe in amnesty for illegal aliens and that a better approach to immigration reform is to enforce the laws.

Walker had just made a strong second-place showing (21 percent) the day before at the Conservative Political Action Conference in Maryland, boosting his visibility as a potential 2016 GOP presidential candidate. Wallace also noted that Walker “shot to the top of the polls in Iowa” and was “near the top nationally.”



Wallace began his questioning of Walker on the topic of immigration by playing a video clip of an interview the governor had with Wisconsin’s *Wausau Daily Herald* in 2013. During that interview, the *Herald* asked Walker: “Can you envision a world where with the right penalties and waiting periods and meet the requirements, where those people can get citizenship?”

To which, Walker replied: “Sure, yes. I mean, I think it makes sense.”

After watching the 2013 interview, Wallace asked Walker: “Isn’t that amnesty?” To which, Walker said:

Well, I don’t believe in amnesty. And part of the reason why I made that a firm position is I look at the way that this president has mishandled that issue.... I was one of the first governors that joined the lawsuit [against the federal government] that has been successful, at least on this initial technicality. And I hope we prevail ultimately throughout the courts....

I think the way you enforce it is not through amnesty. I think the better approach is to enforce the laws.

Wallace reminded Walker that back when he was the Milwaukee County executive (2002-2010) he had supported the Kennedy-McCain comprehensive immigration plan. He then asked the governor if it was his position that as part of a comprehensive plan, combined with tough enforcement and E-Verify, the 11 million people already here illegally should be able to pay a penalty and get citizenship.

Walker answered: “No, I’m not talking about amnesty. And even I said the reason for that is over time...”

And Wallace interrupted: “But you said you supported it.”

After which Walker stated: “And my view has changed. I’m flat-out saying it. Candidates can say that; sometimes they don’t.”

When Wallace asked him if his position had changed since 2013, Walker replied:

Absolutely. I look at the problems we’ve experienced for the last few years. I’ve talked to governors



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on the border and others out there. I've talked to people all across America.

And the concern I have is that we need to secure the border. We ultimately need to put in place a system that works. A legal immigration system that works.

And part of doing this is to put the onus on employers, getting them E-Verify and tools to do that. But I don't think you do it through amnesty.

Walker has enjoyed a good reputation as a fiscal conservative since becoming governor of Wisconsin. As was noted in an [article in *The New American*](#) shortly after beginning his first term as governor, Walker presented his "Wisconsin Budget Repair Bill," which closed the \$362-million deficit left behind by his predecessor, Democrat Jim Doyle. That bill also contained language reducing union bargaining power over pay and benefits, and increasing the amount union members must pay for those benefits.

In response to Walker's support for a bill that would force wage cuts on public-sector workers and curtail their collective bargaining rights, tens of thousands of protesters gathered at the state capitol in Madison in 2011. Members of unions representing state workers, particularly teachers, participated in the massive demonstrations.

Following the protest, the unions instigated a recall campaign from which Walker emerged the winner, over the same opponent he defeated in 2010.

Walker's record of fiscal conservatism and willingness to stand up to big labor has earned him popularity among conservative voters.

His former apparent softness on the subject of amnesty for illegal aliens was a weak spot on his political resumé, however. With his latest revelations — as well as his support for making Wisconsin a party to the lawsuit brought by a large group of states against the federal government challenging the Obama administration's amnesty program — it is possible that Walker has indeed changed his position to one that is more in line with voters opposed to amnesty.

Screenprint of Walker slogan: office of the governor of Wisconsin

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