



GOP Selects Less Aggressive Immigration Chair

Though the GOP was predicted to give the position of the new chairman of the Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on immigration, citizenship, and other related issues to Representative Steve King of Iowa, they instead chose California Representative Elton Gallegly, believing him to be less of a liability in the 2012 elections. Though King was a top Republican on the immigration subcommittee, Republican Representative Steve King was likely rejected for the position as a result of his controversial proposal for the border fence. The Blaze reports, Republicans eliminated a potential liability with Latino voters Friday by refusing to give the top spot on an immigration subcommittee to a congressman who once proposed stopping illegal immigrants with an electrified fence.



King made the recommendation in 2007, adding, We do that with livestock all the time.

While Representative Gallegly is known as an immigration hawk, he is believed to be less likely to make divisive remarks that could hurt the GOP's presidential bid in 2012. King will instead serve as the vice chairman.

Upon accepting the chairman position, Gallegly stated, I appreciate the opportunity he has given me to step up congressional efforts to remove illegal immigrants from the workforce and to protect American jobs for those with a legal right to work in the United States.

He also indicated that the first two subcommittee hearings held under his direction will focus on Immigration and Customs Enforcement efforts as well as the E-Verify employment screening program.

An immigration expert at the Center for American Progress, Angie Kelley, asserts, however, that while Gallegly's views may appear less staunch than King's, Gallegly's restrictionist roots are very clear and they run very deep.

For example, Gallegly played a key role in creating the pilot program that eventually led to the formation of the E-Verify system, helped to pass an amendment in the House to deny education to children of illegal immigrants, and a number of additional tough measures against illegal immigrants.

According to [Flapsblog.com](#), Gallegly said he would oppose any form of amnesty, and he pledged to quickly hold hearings to scrutinize the Obama administration's approach to work site enforcement and to expand the use of E-Verify, a program for employer screening of workers' immigration status.

On Friday, Gallegly declared, The answer to illegal immigration is fairly simple. First, we must enforce our laws and secure the border. Second, we must remove the magnets that encourage illegal immigration. Finally, we must remove the benefits that make it easy for them to stay.



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on January 10, 2011

However, Gallegly also helped to sponsor a bill in 1995 that would have granted legal status to agricultural workers.

Roy Beck, president of Numbers USA, an organization that lobbies for tougher immigration laws, says that his group gave Gallegly an A for his overall work on immigration, and contends that Numbers USA is generally happy with Smith's choice.

He adds, however, that King would be a successful vice chairman of the subcommittee. Beck remarked, If this was about trying to muzzle an outspoken member, it is not going to be very effective.

The decision to appoint Gallegly as the subcommittee chair rested solely upon the discretion of Representative Lamar Smith, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. Flapsblog.com writes that Smith's decision surprised many, as King was long predicted to have the job.

King contends that House Speaker John Boehner played a significant role in the decision-making process. He claims, The speaker holds the big gavel, and he decides who gets the other gavels. It makes it very clear that it's not meritocracy.

Likewise, King contends that as Boehner is not known for being aggressive on immigration, Gallegly was Boehner's preference since he is less forceful on immigration than King would have been.

According to Alfonso Aguilar, executive director of the Latino Partnership for Conservative Principles, the choice was a clear indication of the GOP efforts to avoid upsetting Latino voters.

King also made contentious remarks in the past regarding President Obama, indicating that the president favors black Americans. He also referred to a settlement in the discrimination lawsuit filed by blacks and Native Americans as reparations.

However, not all Americans are offended by King's stances. *The Blaze* writes, He has supporters for his tough talk on illegal immigration. On Wednesday, he introduced a bill to deny U.S.-born children of immigrants automatic citizenship. Smith has said he only wants to advance the legislation that has widespread support from Americans.

Photo: California Representative Elton Gallegly



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