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Bush's view of comprehensive immigration reform is one to support

Pat Perriello | Jul. 16, 2013 NCR Today

Former President George W. Bush has it right. Immigration is not a partisan issue. In a July 11 editorial, *The Baltimore Sun* highlights Bush's recent helpful comments [1] on the need to move forward with comprehensive immigration reform.

Many Republicans have spoken about the change in demographics and the loss of Hispanic voters to the Democrats in recent elections. This was not the point Bush was making. Together with John McCain and other Republicans, Bush tried valiantly during his own administration to pass comprehensive immigration legislation but failed. He speaks not of the need to get more Hispanic votes but of the need to do what is right.

Bush speaks of the contributions immigrants have made and continue to make to our country. He speaks of the need to include benevolence as one of the characteristics of any discussion about immigration reform. The *Sun* editorial notes that 72 percent of Americans agree with the former president that immigration has been and is good for our country.

We know that a group of eight senators, including four Republicans, came together and crafted a comprehensive reform bill that the Senate passed. The House of Representatives, however, seems to have other plans.

House Speaker (and Catholic) John Boehner indicates the House will consider immigration piecemeal. Border security will be addressed first and legal status later. The editorial suggests this likely means never. Boehner also insists a majority of his Republican caucus must agree to any bill brought to the House floor.

The reality suggests many hard-liners want no legal status for these immigrants at all. Many others want only something less than citizenship. While it is true these individuals broke the law, the editorial notes that they are still human, and we undermine our own humanity when we fail to recognize that fact. Responding as the House wishes to respond will result in a permanent underclass in our country.

I agree Bush is on the right track with a policy of benevolence and compassion. It seems the true desire of the House majority is to ensure nothing gets done. This policy may or may not provide some temporary political benefit to the representatives espousing such a position. It does, however, demonstrate that these representatives lack any understanding of what the words "benevolence" and "compassion" mean. It suggests they have no interest in doing the right thing -- only the expedient thing.

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[1] http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2013-07-11/news/bs-ed-bush-immigration-20130711_1_immigration-reform-border-security-house-republican