

File
Immigration Speech

Granny D

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Subject: grannyd

Dear Carol and Ruth: My printer does not work with this computer, and Jim's hasn't worked for days. So, will you please print this and bring it to me sometime today? After I send you another speech, which I am working on, trying to decide which to use, or will I combine them? A lot depends on how much time each takes. I am furious at the way things are going with the immigrants. I think it all began when I walked across the country and was in Corumbo, New Mexico, when we were all awakened by a group of very tired, very scared, very hungry people arrived from the border, banging on the door to be let in. Our hostess, the owner of this combination rooms, gifts, Indian rugs, gasoline, etc. sat them down and fed them, and while they were eating telephoned for the immigration officials to come and get them. It seemed so cruel, but of course she was right and it just seemed a rotten way for things to be. I thought one day, I would try to do something, and with the subject hot, in both debates, I thought I would like to say so.

Thank you.

It is normally expected that, when given an opportunity to speak, I will talk about campaign finance reform and, more specifically, about the public financing of campaigns as a way of cutting the threads of the big-money puppet show in Washington and in Concord.

But today I would like to talk about unauthorized immigration.

Of course, unauthorized immigration has nothing to do with the big money corruption of our political system. It is just a matter of people in poor countries trying their best to find their way to better opportunities in the north for their families.

It seems to be a big issue with our Republican candidates, as they are well-known to be the law and order party. That, after all, is why they are demanding that Scooter Libby pay the full price for his perjuries and obstructions of justice. They are the law and order party, with the normal exceptions of the Geneva Convention and the U.S. Constitution, especially its Bill of Rights. But we know what they mean: When they say they are for law and order, they are talking mostly about keeping down the uppity poor folk. They are certainly not talking about the big corporations, hotel companies, agribusiness giants, retailers who employ millions of unauthorized immigrants but who make up for that sin with large campaign donations.

But I do not come to talk about corrupting campaign donations and the need for public campaign financing. I come to talk of unauthorized immigration and a little about corn and something about tortillas. I call it unauthorized immigration, not illegal, because I don't want to use words that confuse Republicans.

In saying that the Republican candidates are more interested in the immigration issue, I do not mean to imply that it is less important for any of us.

If you will look around the check-out lines at the grocery stores and notice the widening measurements of our fellow citizens –we can hardly get through the aisles any more. We can certainly see for ourselves the problem of having too much cheap labor around to do all our yardwork and housework for us. By my calculations, the roughly 3 billion pounds of extra weight now being carried on the hips of working-age American citizens is roughly equivalent to the combined weight of the unauthorized immigrants now in our communities. The math is clear and persuasive. Cheap labor is bad for every...body.

But why are so many people risking their lives to come into our country now? When did this big rush begin?

It began when Mr. Clinton approved NAFTA – the North American Free Trade Agreement, and when he militarized our southern border at the same time. Prior to these combined actions, families crossed the border very commonly, especially during harvest seasons. After harvest, they would go home to Mexico or Central America because that's where they lived with their families in quite happy communities.

When the border was militarized, it became to risky to go back and forth. So they stayed.

Why did Mr. Clinton militarize the border? He did so because NAFTA was about to pull out the rug from under Mexico's small family farms. We flooded Mexico with cheap corn--exports that we subsidize to the tune of some \$25 billion dollars a year by Congress to a handful of agribusiness giants. Of course, I am not here to tell you why Congress does that, and what might be done to stop it. But they do it, and Mexican family farmers

cannot compete. In the years since NAFTA was signed, half of Mexico's small farms have failed. The only kind of farming that can now compete in Mexico is big agribusiness, which does not employ many people. Tortillas in Mexico now contain two-thirds imported corn, and they are three times as expensive at retail level than before NAFTA. The people have less money, and the cost of food is rising. We have done that. Our precious Senators and Congressmen and their corporate cronies have done that raw and cruel exploitation in our names.

The result of undermining Mexican farms, as Clinton expected, was a rising flood of poor people moving from rural areas into Mexico's big cities, which have become so poor and overcrowded that all one can do is dream of going north across the border.

Now, if any Democratic candidates for President would like to show a little courage and intelligence, let them address the real cause of our flood of unauthorized immigrants. Will Mrs. Clinton or Mr. Obama or Mr. Edwards or any of the other candidates face down the agri-gangsters that are behind this problem? Probably they will not, so long as Iowa has a major primary.

Let me say that I am not ranting and raving about these new Americans. When Mexico owned Texas and everything west, and when they cut off migration across their borders, our people kept coming –crossing illegally in search of opportunities for their families. When Mexico got upset by this, we trumped-up false reasons for a war, and we illegally took those lands. So let's not stand on any moral high ground.

The people coming across the border today, with the usual exceptions, are family people with an incredible work ethic. Personally, I welcome them. I congratulate them for their courage and their dedication to their families. I want them to stay and become citizens, or, if some prefer, to return to their homeland at a time when there is international justice and a decent chance for their prosperity at home.

I regret what the political corruption of our system has done to their farms and their communities back home. It is not the peoples' fault –it is the fault of corrupt leaders of both parties. We must speak this truth to these powerful people, even to those candidates that we otherwise admire.

So, candidates Clinton, Edwards, Obama and the rest: Do you understand

the reasons why immigration numbers are growing? Are you smart enough to understand the situation? Are you brave enough to do something--to even say something--about it? Or is the truth too big for you?

I ask you all to be good citizens and good Democrats. And that means to ask the toughest questions so that the interests of the people --the people of our nation and of the world --will be served. Isn't that what we're here for?

And do you see why I do not need to harp on campaign finance reform, to cut the strings of the puppet show in Washington and in Concord that allows these cruelties to continue? I didn't have to say a word about that, because you understand it. You understand what must be done.

Thank you.