



IMMIGRATION REFORM HITS THE SENATE

But First, Breaking News Out of Boston

Two immigration issues are top of the fold this week.

First, two young Chechen immigrants bombed the Boston Marathon Monday. Due to the outstanding work of both the FBI and Massachusetts law enforcement, those perpetrators were identified and one apprehended.

It's no small irony that on this Patriots' Day, the Massachusetts governor has asked the entire city of Boston to "[shelter in place](#)" while searching for the remaining suspect -- an unprecedented action for any urban center conducting a manhunt.

The family of these perpetrators were Chechen Muslims, who came to the United States by way of Kyrgyzstan. It is likely that they acted alone, two disenfranchised young immigrants, but their belief system and tactics have all the DNA markers of Islamic fanaticism. As you recall, it was Chechen Islamists who stormed a school in Beslan, Russia, murdering more than 300 people, half of them children. And this is the same fanaticism that motivated other attacks against Americans since 9/11, particularly the bloodiest assault by Islamist Nidal Malik Hasan, who murdered 14 and wounded 29 others at Ft. Hood, while yelling "Allahu Akbar!" The Obama administration has yet to label that incident as anything other than "workplace violence."

We will not join the chorus of speculators about this attack or its motives. The facts will become clear in the coming weeks. But one thing is clear: The disgraceful media talkinghead coverage of this attack, which Mark Alexander covered yesterday in "[The Good, Bad and Ugly](#)."

On to the most pressing immigration issue today, dealing with illegal immigrants -- some of whom, by the way, form the bedrock of urban Hispanic gangs who murder more people in a week than all terrorist attacks on U.S. soil since 9/11, combined.

Immigration Reform Hits the Senate

"To prevent crimes, is the noblest end and aim of criminal jurisprudence. To punish them, is one of the means necessary for the accomplishment of this noble end and aim."
--James Wilson

The Senate's immigration reform committee -- the "Gang of Eight," so-called because of its bipartisan composition of four Republican and four Democrat senators -- will hold hearings today and Monday over its proposal to reform U.S.



Members of the 'Gang of Eight'

immigration law. At stake is no less than the fate of U.S. border security and the legal disposition of millions of undocumented Democrats residing in the U.S. The primary thing to remember is that Democrats' objective is to co-opt Hispanics, just like they've done with blacks, all in service of their agenda to grow the State.

The 850-page bill was released at 2:00 a.m. Wednesday morning, providing all of two days for review before debate begins. That's at least better than the review offered to the nation under ObamaCare -- no hearings, no debate and passage under cover of night. Then again, we're in the "new era of openness," so perhaps we judge too harshly. Why the rush? For starters, those who favor the bill know that the faster

it's pushed through, the less time there is to learn more about its provisions or to rally opposition.

The bill has three main parts: 1) a so-called "pathway to citizenship" for illegals currently domiciled in the U.S. -- 11-20 million people, depending on who's doing the counting; 2) "improved" border security, complete with protective legislative "triggers" to ensure that goal is met; and 3) changes to immigration rules to grant a more favorable status to skilled workers, as opposed to the current system based on allowing relatives of existing families entrance, which values family ties over economic productivity. The first provision is the most controversial.

Though the bill does not contain the phrase "pathway to citizenship," the term lies at the heart of the proposed law. In exchange for promises of better border security, tighter control, better status-monitoring, and non-compliance- and retro-penalties, the current population illegally residing in the U.S. will be allowed to remain legally with the prospect of future citizenship. The legislation also imposes E-Verify on all employers. Each of these provisions, according to the bill, must occur *before* the "pathway" becomes operative.

After payment of a \$500 penalty and any back-taxes owed, and provided they can show they haven't been convicted of a serious crime within the U.S., formerly illegal immigrants gain "probationary" (or "provisional") legal status after the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) begins to implement: a) 100 percent border surveillance capability; and b) 90 percent enforcement capability (i.e., the ability to detain nine out of 10 of those illegally crossing the U.S.-Mexico border). DHS would have six months to propose a plan to accomplish these tasks, and then have five years following that to meet those goals. If the goals are not met during that time, a commission will mandate additional policies DHS must follow to ensure compliance.

Additionally, probationary residents must pass a background check and show proof of gainful employment. Moreover, they will not receive *any*

federal benefits -- food stamps, welfare, ObamaCare, Social Security, etc. -- and they must renew their status periodically. After 10 years in this status, they could apply for a "green card," and up to an additional three years after that, become a U.S. citizen.

Bottom line: There's not much to like about this bill. First, we don't like its "omnibus" nature. Further, we don't like the fact that 11-20 million aliens living in America receive an essentially free pass on legal accountability for their wrongful acts. We also don't trust the same federal government that has been *both* unable *and* also unwilling to enforce existing immigration law to enforce the "reformed" law. Finally, we don't like the announcement that the Gang of Eight plans to block any amendments to the bill, attempting to curtail the deliberative process so that the bill has a better chance of passing. All of these issues leave us uneasy, at best, with the prospects for the long-term success of this legislation.

That said, there are worse solutions than that proposed by Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) and the Gang of Eight. We believe Rubio is trying to remain true to conservative principles while also recognizing the reality that the Demo-gogues control the Senate. However, we also heartily agree with Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL), who warns that we will be left with merely the promise of better border security tomorrow for what amounts to a blanket pass to those who are violating our laws. In other words, we're giving up something valuable and might get nothing in return.

In the end, the nation seems to be left with a Hobson's Choice. One choice involves attempting an immigration fix that no one is happy with, including a "gladly-pay-you-tomorrow-for-a-hamburger-today" shot at securing the borders, and a not-quite-amnesty/not-quite-not-amnesty program for current illegal immigrants. The other choice is an overwhelmingly unsatisfying status quo: Calling it a day and leaving things as they are, with the current laws on the books unenforced, a virtual sieve of a border, and federal benefits dished out to illegal aliens right and left. Either choice reeks.

On Cross-Examination

"I think it's incumbent on Republicans, Democrats, and every one of us to ask what is going to happen to working Americans whose wages have been falling since 2000, who are unemployed at a very high rate. [The Senate bill] will impact them adversely. We have to ask how the new flow of workers is going to maybe double the current flow of legal workers in the future, in addition to those who will be legalized, [which is] 11 million. The public interest is to figure out how we can deal with the crisis we face, how we can have a lawful system that serves the national interest without hammering ... the average low-income worker, the African-American and Hispanic worker that's here. It's logical that if you bring in a massive supply of low-wage workers, you're going to pull the workers down." --Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL)

Government and Politics

Patriots' Day 2013 -- Liberty in the Balance
[Patriots' Day](#) (April 19th), though not widely celebrated, commemorates the substance of the eternal fight for Liberty as "endowed by our Creator." More than just the anniversary of the [Battles of Lexington and Concord](#), Patriots' Day embodies the spirit of the first American Revolution and the original Sons of Liberty.

For more, read Mark Alexander's latest essay [commemorating Patriots' Day](#).

Finally, today is the final day of the [2013 Patriots' Day Campaign](#) and **we need to raise \$11,250**. Please support our mission to sustain our legacy of Liberty through *The Patriot Post*, a touchstone for countless American Patriots across our nation.

News From the Swamp: Gun Grabbers Fail

On Wednesday, the Democrat-controlled Senate failed to advance Barack Obama's prized "[sensible gun control measure](#)" to expand background checks for gun transfers. Senate Democrats even blocked a vote on Obama's so-called "assault weapons" ban and a ban on high-capacity magazines, tabling those measures for "more opportune timing."

Responding to the vote, a petulant Obama declared, "The gun lobby and its allies willfully lied about the bill. They claimed that it would create some sort of Big Brother gun registry. ... There were no coherent arguments as to why we wouldn't do this. It came down to politics. ... [A]ll in all, today was a pretty shameful day for Washington."

As for "lies," the BIG lie in the so-called "gun loophole" legislation is that it would prevent the next Newtown. Yet none of the sociopaths in any of the mass murders that Obama shamelessly exploits acquired the weapons they used through any loophole. Obama also continues to lie in claiming that 40 percent of guns are purchased without a background check.

Additionally, his repeated claim that "90 percent of the American people support universal background checks" is dubious at best. It's a meaningless question, because what he means when he says "universal background checks" is completely different than what we mean. And if he wants to throw polls around, Gallup says that just [4 percent of Americans](#) think gun control is a pressing concern.

Regarding "Big Brother," a central database of background checks may not exist as one complete record, but a master list for gun purchases in recent decades can be reconstituted from its component parts maintained on government servers. And if you don't think Big Brother is already out there hounding law-abiding gun owners, ask the Texas soldier who was arrested for ['rudely displaying' his weapon](#).

As for "shameful politics," that more aptly describes the way Obama parades like political puppets the grieving parents of murdered children, and uses the caskets of those same children as a political soapbox. (Of course, he conveniently omits those parents who oppose his agenda.) Using that heart-wrenching grief to stir national sentiments in hopes of passing statist gun control measures is beyond disgraceful. "Do we really think that thousands of families whose lives have been shattered by gun violence don't have a right to weigh in on this issue?" he asked. "Do we think

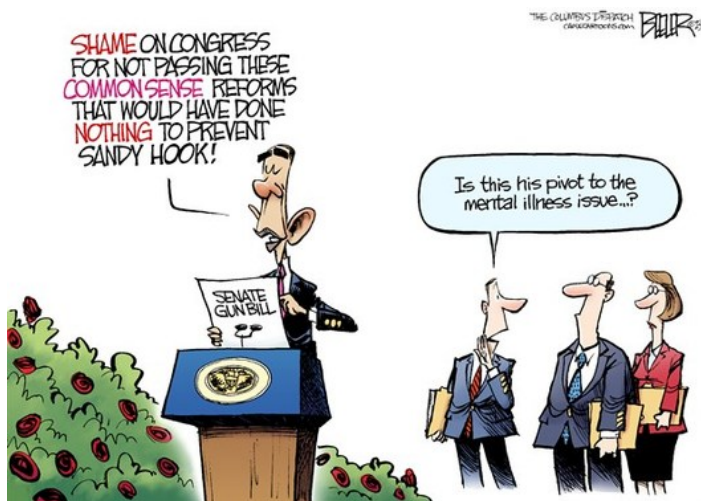
their emotions, their loss is not relevant to this debate?"

Reason magazine's Jacob Sullum [aptly responded](#), "Of course they have a right to speak their minds. But no, their emotions are *not* relevant when it comes to empirical questions such as the impact of background checks, 'assault weapon' bans, and limits on magazines. Their pain tells us nothing about the effectiveness or constitutionality of such measures. To the contrary, it obscures those issues with an impenetrable emotional fog."

Notably, Obama concluded, "I see this as just Round One." He promised executive action "without Congress." In other words, he and his NeoCom cadres await the next opportunity to politicize a mass murder, take the ready-to-go Senate legislation off the shelf and pass it before the emotional fog once again gives way to the clarity of reason.

This Week's 'Braying Jenny' Award

"[W]e're just not taking no for an answer." --Nancy Pelosi on gun control



New and Notable Legislation

Without a moment's debate, both chambers of Congress voted to repeal the Stop Trading On Congressional Knowledge (STOCK) Act. The law, passed in 2012 to great fanfare, required some 28,000 senior government officials, including all of Congress, to adhere to strict transparency rules concerning their

financial transactions. Too many members have enriched themselves in the markets by using privileged information gained in the course of their duties. But the STOCK Act's reporting requirements were too cumbersome for Congress, so they postponed the reporting deadlines twice before ultimately deciding to ditch the law altogether. Of course, it's still okay for the government to stick its nose into financial transactions that take place in the private sector.

Hope 'n' Change: ObamaCare Is a 'Train Wreck'

Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT) played a key role in writing the legislation known as ObamaCare. So, what does this wordsmith think of his own masterpiece now? "I just see a huge train wreck coming," Baucus said this week of implementation of the now-20,000-page law. Yes, and some of us saw that four years ago. But you know what they say, success has many fathers; failure is an orphan.

Others are taking off the blinders, too. The United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers and Allied Workers, one of the numerous unions to back the law initially, is now withdrawing support and calling for repeal. "[R]egrettably, our concerns over certain provisions in the ACA have not been addressed, or in some instances, totally ignored," the union said in a statement. "In the rush to achieve its passage, many of the Act's provisions were not fully conceived, resulting in unintended consequences that are inconsistent with the promise that those who were satisfied with their employer sponsored coverage could keep it." How 'bout that? Democrats lied.

From the Left: Perez Faces Senate Grilling

Republicans in the House and Senate released a 63-page report detailing the reasons behind their opposition to Thomas Perez's nomination as labor secretary. Perez, the latest fellow traveler tapped by Obama to join his Politburo, er, cabinet, has a [troubling history](#) as head of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. He was responsible for dropping an airtight felony voter intimidation case against the New Black Panther Party, and he launched numerous race-baiting lawsuits against state and local

governments regarding voting laws and municipal hiring practices. The GOP report details his attempt to set up a quid pro quo with the city of St. Paul, Minnesota, over a housing discrimination lawsuit he was overseeing.

During his Senate testimony Thursday, Perez faced questions about other things as well, including using his personal email account some 1,200 times to conduct government business, in violation of the Federal Records Act. Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) asked if Perez intended to comply with a subpoena issued April 10 by House Oversight Committee Chairman Darrell Issa (R-CA) regarding those emails and other documents related to the aforementioned issues. Perez said he was "frankly surprised" to be subpoenaed. We, however, are not at all surprised that he has no intention to be transparent, nor are we shocked to see that Senate Democrats are aiming to rush the vote on his nomination next week before more unpleasant facts are unearthed.

Obama Snubs Thatcher Funeral

[Margaret Thatcher](#), the longest-serving British prime minister of the 20th century, was laid to rest on Wednesday. The funeral took place at St. Paul's Cathedral in London as thousands of guests from around the world gathered to pay their respects. Not among the guests, however, was a single Obama administration official. Apparently, the White House was too busy exploiting tragedy in the final days leading up to the Senate's failed gun control vote to send any senior members. Either that, or perhaps the administration was simply expressing its hatred for strong, conservative women. The U.S. embassy remarked that it was "a hugely significant week in terms of U.S. domestic politics." Further, a spokesman went on to explain that Michelle Obama and Joe Biden are "the president's point people on gun control" and that "there is a lot of movement on Capitol Hill on gun control issues." But Republican Speaker John Boehner *did* send a House delegation.

To say the least, Obama's snub of the Iron Lady's funeral caused the British "surprise and disappointment." Recall that Obama sent an official

delegation to the funeral of Venezuelan thug Hugo Chavez -- a socialist with close ties to Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Cuba's Castro dictators. The fact that no one in the Obama clan could even make an appearance is deplorable and speaks volumes regarding their open hostility toward Liberty and the heroes who brought down the Soviet Union.

Meet the New Boss; Same as the Old Boss

While the special election in Venezuela to replace Hugo Chavez was much closer than most expected -- the slim margin bringing cries of voter fraud from loser Henrique Capriles -- handpicked Chavez successor Nicolas Maduro won the contest to finish the unexpired term of the late dictator. Maduro won by only 230,000 votes out of 15 million cast. The tight result was surprising given the built-in advantages for Maduro, who had media support and Chavez allies on the national election commission.

Maduro portrayed himself as the natural successor to Chavez -- mentioning his name at every opportunity -- and his promises are much the same. Maduro pledged to raise the monthly minimum wage three times this year to keep up with runaway inflation close to 30 percent, as well as to perpetuate a gasoline subsidy that allows citizens to fill up for literally pennies per gallon. The disparity in price between Venezuela and neighboring Colombia has resulted in a lucrative gasoline black market in some border towns, but it also means the nation with the largest proven oil reserves in the world actually imports gasoline. Crude oil production is down one-fourth since Chavez took over, and Venezuelan refineries are falling into disrepair despite the abundance of product.

With the mess left by Chavez, outside experts familiar with the Venezuelan economy predict hard times ahead for the nation as the government struggles to stay afloat. Government spending now provides 45 percent of the nation's economy, making it both unsustainable and difficult to curtail without a painful economic contraction. Let that be a warning to avoid the situation in the first place.

Security

Warfront With Jihadistan: Does the U.S. Torture?

A [577-page report](#) released by an 11-member panel established by the Constitution Project says that "it is indisputable that the United States engaged in the practice of torture" after 9/11 and that the nation's highest officials, including the president, bore ultimate responsibility for it. While the report acknowledges that brutality has occurred in every American war (war is hell, after all), it also alleges that never before had there been "the kind of considered and detailed discussions that occurred after 9/11 directly involving a president and his top advisers on the wisdom, propriety, and legality of inflicting pain and torment on some detainees in our custody."

Led by two former members of Congress with executive branch experience -- Asa Hutchinson (R-AR) and James R. Jones (D-OK) -- the Project's goal is to start a national dialog and try to produce a consensus on the torture question. While consensus may not be achievable, the report will certainly restart some discussions.

Of course, the \$64,000 question is this: What constitutes torture? The report claims that American officials not only waterboarded prisoners, but also pushed them into walls, stripped them, kept them awake for days on end and chained them for hours in uncomfortable positions. Certainly, these are tough actions taken against hardened illegal combatants in order to obtain intelligence, but are these acts truly *torture*?

The ultimate definition of "torture" is, of course, a momentous legal issue that has been debated for decades. The Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel wrote a series of legal opinions in the early 2000s saying that these methods were not torture if used under strict rules, but these memos were later withdrawn. Many members of the Leftmedia claim *anything* that might make an illegal combatant even the slightest bit uncomfortable is nothing but heinous American torture of innocent foreigners, while we'd

point to the *actual* torture endured by American troops in numerous wars for meaningful contrast.

No New Medal

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced that the Pentagon won't create a new medal for drone operators and other cyber warriors, though it will make a special designation that can be affixed to existing medals. The February proposal that a new "Distinguished Warfare Medal" would outrank the Bronze Star Medal, which is awarded for actions in a combat zone, drew criticism from veterans' groups and lawmakers. "The concern with the DWM was its precedence, not necessarily the medal itself," said Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA).

[Hagel wrote](#), "Utilizing a distinguishing device to recognize impacts on combat operations reserves our existing combat medals for those Service members who incur the physical risk and hardship of combat, perform valorous acts, are wounded in combat, or as a result of combat give their last full measure for our Nation."

Economy

Regulatory Commissars: EPA Slowing Down on Power Plant Regs

Could it be a case of second thoughts? After promising tough new rules on power plants that would limit them to emitting no more than 1,000 pounds of carbon produced per megawatt hour -- in essence, eliminating the coal-fired power plant -- the EPA backed off a proposed April 13 deadline. The official explanation was a delay caused by nearly two million public comments to review, but there was also the problem that even many natural gas-powered plants may not be able to conform with the regulations.

Then there are the inevitable legal challenges. The EPA needs to "set a standard that will hold up in court, or otherwise it jeopardizes the entire idea of regulating greenhouse gas emissions from coal-fired power plants," said Clean Air Watch president Frank O'Donnell. It is possible that the agency will decide to write separate rules for coal-fired and natural gas-fired plants, encouraging the development of new gas-fired plants at the expense of coal. The long-term

decline of natural gas prices, however, has done almost as much harm to the coal industry as the proposed EPA edicts -- once passed, the new regulations will simply nail the coffin shut on Big Coal.

While environmentalists worry about the delay, they should rest assured that Barack Obama still has almost four long years to inflict damage upon the energy industry. It may not necessarily be a question of legal merits, but simply outlasting judges who may otherwise block the EPA rules.

Sanity on Ethanol?

Whether the issue is the budget, biofuel or Benghazi, there seems to be a perpetual rift between congressional "logic" and reality. In a rare event, however, congressional action and good sense are poised to converge. A bipartisan group of House members introduced legislation that would cap at 10 percent the amount of ethanol per gallon of gasoline. In 2007, Washington bureaucrats, under the influence of the green lobby, projected a significant increase in fuel consumption, and they mandated that increasing amounts of ethanol be used in gasoline. Specifically, the mandate required that 36 billion gallons of ethanol be used in vehicle fuel by 2022. There are several problems, but one stands out -- predictions of increased fuel consumption didn't materialize. In fact, [The Wall Street Journal reports](#), demand has actually dropped since 2007. This means that thanks to the mandate, "more gallons of ethanol are chasing fewer gallons of gas," threatening to raise the percentage of ethanol per gallon to a level even more harmful to engines.

Although the proposed bill still gives a nod to environmentalists, it's at least a step in the right direction. Even pro-ethanol Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) said he's "not convinced that the current requirements are achievable." We realize it's asking a lot, but we wish lawmakers would grasp reality *before* passing bills rather than afterward.

Culture

Faith and Family: The Gosnell Saga Continues

Last week, we highlighted the gruesome case of [Philadelphia abortionist Kermit Gosnell](#) and the Leftmedia blackout of the story. The trial continued in its fifth week, and thanks to the outcry, a few media outlets have lifted their blockade to offer a small bit of coverage. That didn't stop a Wikipedia editor from [trying to delete](#) the site's entry on Gosnell because "It is a local multiple-murder story in Pennsylvania, nothing more."

At the trial, more ghastly details emerged. Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams said, "My grasp of the English language doesn't really allow me to fully describe how horrific this clinic was -- rotting bodies, fetal remains, the smell of urine throughout, blood-stained." Indeed, the Washington Examiner has a [list of details](#) from the evidence and other [damning testimony](#). Read at your own risk.

Furthermore, Gosnell was evidently the abortionist behind the 1972 "Mother's Day Massacre," in which 15 poor women were bused from Chicago to his clinic for pre-Roe abortions. Nine of the women suffered serious complications because Gosnell used an experimental device called a "super coil," which a colleague described as "basically plastic razors that were formed into a ball. ... They were coated into a gel, so that they would remain closed. These would be inserted into the woman's uterus. And after several hours of body temperature ... the gel would melt and these ... things would spring open, supposedly cutting up the fetus." That Pennsylvania regulators left Gosnell in business for nearly 40 more years is almost as criminal as what he did.



Village Academic Curriculum: Volunteer Vouchers on Hold

Tennessee Republican Governor Bill Haslam decided to pull his school voucher proposal from consideration this session. In doing so, he joined the ranks of Republicans willing to let their principles fall by the wayside in the face of pressure. The measure was drafted per the findings of a task force composed of "diverse stakeholders," and would have limited vouchers to 5,000 for the first year, increasing to 20,000 by 2016. Other GOP lawmakers did their own research, however, and as a result have sought to broaden the bill. One popular amendment would strike a compromise restricting the vouchers to low-income areas. It also would have removed restrictions on growth.

Haslam accused fellow Republicans of "gamesmanship," saying they are trying to hijack his bill. But he neglected to mention other groups, especially teachers' unions, who vehemently oppose voucher programs altogether. These groups cite a threat to public schools, which is simply code meaning a competitive threat to their jobs and pensions.

Other GOP legislators have expressed their disappointment with Haslam, stating that it will make any voucher program more difficult to pass in the future. Like most people who attempt to please everyone, the governor has succeeded in pleasing no one. Unfortunately, it's the children of Tennessee who will suffer the consequences.

Climate Change This Week: Earth Day

Monday, April 22 is [Earth Day](#), a.k.a. Vladimir Lenin's birthday. As if on cue, the Communist Party USA sent out an email depicting the earth on fire. What's unclear is whether they mean that to be the result of global warming or of socialist policies.



And Last...

"Want to go to Mars?" [asks BBC News](#). "Dutch organisation Mars One says it will open applications imminently. It would be a one-way trip, and the company hopes to build a community of settlers on the planet." That got us to thinking, as you can imagine, of several hundred elected officials in the Swamp. Wouldn't it be nice to not only toss them out of office but to send them on a one-way trip to another planet? But then the BBC burst our bubble: "Applicants must be resilient, adaptable, resourceful and must work well within a team." A lot of things describe politicians, but "plays well with others" isn't one of them.

Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus et Fidelis!
Nate Jackson for *The Patriot Post* Editorial Team