

Report of recent lobbying trip to US Senate

Bruce DeCell, father in law of WTC victim Mark Petrocelli, and Joan Molinaro, mother of victim Carl Molinaro of the FDNY, spent July 13 through 15 in Washington D.C. to lobby against two bills: S. 1645 AgJOBS Guest worker Amnesty and S.1545 The DREAM Act Student Amnesty.

Both of these bills give amnesty to illegal aliens. The DREAM Act also gives amnesty to the parents of illegal aliens who were brought into this country as young children. It also gives instate reduction on college tuition to these children.

Joan and Bruce asked them to consider instead sponsoring Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) bill S.1906, The Homeland Security Enhancement Act. This was introduced in Nov. of 2003 and would give state and local law enforcement agencies the authority to detain criminal illegal aliens within the course of their regular duties. It offers incentives for cooperation in the enforcement of federal immigration law by creating new grant programs for the purchase of equipment for housing and processing illegal aliens.

The appointments were arranged by the staff of FAIR, and Paul Egan and Sandra Gunn of the FAIR staff attended the meetings.

Following is Joan's log of their meetings over three days.

Our Trip to Dizzy World, aka Washington D.C.

1. Aides of Senator John Ensign (D-NV) (The Senator is a Cosponsor of the AgJOB Amnesty, S.1645. Met with D'arcy Grisier, Military Legislative Assistant and Chris Jaarda, legislative Assistant for the Senator

{Both men were curious and listened to our arguments. They took a lot of notes. They agreed with some of our points and said that they would bring our concerns to the attention of the Senator.}

2. Aides of Senator Joseph R. Biden's office. (D-DE) (Cosponsor of the AgJOB Amnesty, S.1645) Met with Louisa Terrell..

(She was okay, took notes, listened to our concerns, said we made some valid points in our arguments and would pass on our concerns to the Senator.)

3. Aides of Senator John Kerry's office (yes the dope running for President) (D-MA) Cosponsor of both AgJOBS S.1645 and Dream Act Amnesty S.1545 Met with Kate Joyce. Again no card, who cares she was a jerk.

(She was rude, condescending. She more or less put us down. Never took notes. Said the Senator knew what he was doing. She lost my vote for the Senator.)

4. Aides of Senator Elizabeth Dole's office (R-NC) Cosponsor of AgJOBS Amnesty S.1645. Met with Michael Watley Chief of Staff and Scott Quesenberry, Chief Counsel and Policy Director for the Senator.

(Both were friendly, listened to our concerns and agreed with some of our points. They took notes. They will bring this to the Senator's attention.)

5. Appointment with Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) Cosponsor of AgJOBS Amnesty, S.1645. The Senator did not show, we met with Todd Wooten, Legislative Assistant from her office.

(The entire time we spoke with him, he never looked at us. He seemed very uninterested with what we had to say. Said nothing of passing on our concerns to the Senator, did not take notes.)

6. Appointment with Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) Cosponsor AgJOBS Amnesty S.1645. Met with David Sohn, Commerce Counsel and the Senator. (Jerk of a Senator!!!)

(The Senators words “ You will never get me to change my mind. I must do what my constituents want. We grow wonderful strawberries and we need the workers. That he brought 9/11 to the public forefront by asking for the 9/11 commission. Said that we should come and see the beautiful strawberry fields and then we would understand his support of the bill. Said it was better to control some, than none.” I then jumped out of my chair and he jumped back. I said (yelled) to him, “ So it’s more important to protect the strawberries than it is the lives of your constituents? I then invited him to come to the cemetery and visit my son.” He was unmoved and left the room.) I will never buy strawberries again!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

7. Aides of Senator Chuck Hagel (R-NE) Cosponsor of three bills, AgJOB, S.1645, Dream Act S. 1545 and Hagel-Daschle Guest worker Amnesty S. 2010. Met with Lou Ann Linehan, Chief of staff and Jill Konz, Deputy Legislative Director to the Senator.

(They listened and Lou Ann Linehan said that “ The 9/11 families would do better if we did not associate with “Fair”, since Fair wants to close all our borders. The 9/11 families have enough clout. That Fair had taken out an ad that attacked the Senator.” She seemed unaware that two members of Fair were sitting with us. She did listen to our concerns and was polite.) I did explain to her that the 9/11 families were not asking to close all our borders, we simply wanted to make changes in our immigration laws, and not give amnesty to any illegal aliens.

8. Aides of Senator Michael D. Crapo (R-ID) Cosponsor of Dream Act S.1545. Met with Ted Dahlstrom Legislative Aide to the Senator.

(Went well, said that at this time the Senator was NOT supporting or opposing any bill now.)

9. Aides of Senator Walter Pryor’s office (D-AR) Cosponsor of AJOB S.1645 and Dream Act S.1545. Met with Walter Pryor, Legislative Director for the Senator (not related to Senator)

(He was friendly, listened, took notes. Said that he understood our point of view, we had valid issues and would bring them to the Senator’s attention.)

10. Aides of Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) Cosponsor of AgJOB,S.1645 and Dream Acts, S. 1545. Met with Brent Woolfork, Legislative Correspondent for the Senator.

(He was polite, listened, took notes, asked questions. Understood our views and concerns and said he would bring them to the attention of the Senator.)

11. Aides of Senator George Voinovich (R-OH) Cosponsor of the AgJOB S.1645. Met with Arran Haynes, Legislative Aide/Assistant to the Legislative Director.

(He was pleasant, asked questions. Wanted more information sent to him from Fair on AgJOB. Said that the Senator would not be signing on to the Dream Act.)

So went our first day. My feet were killing me!!!!!! And except for wanting to kick Senator Wyden’s XXX, and having to bite our tongues a few times it went pretty well I guess.

12. Aides of Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) Cosponsor both AgJOB, S.1645 and Guest Worker Amnesty, S.1387. Met with Franklin Barca, Legislative Assistant, and Pete McAleer, Legislative Fellow, United States Marine Corps.

(Both were polite, listened. Barca took some notes. They asked questions about Sessions bill. Seemed interested in Sessions bill. Would bring this the Senator Gregg’s attention.)

13. Aides of Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) Cosponsor of 3 bills, AgJOB S.1645, Dream Acts, S. 1545 and H-1B,L-1 Reform Bill, S. 1452. Met with Kevin Landy, Minority Counsel for the Senator.

(He listened, said “ah,ha” a lot, took notes. Agreed on some points. Didn’t think Sanctions would prevent terrorist from coming into the country. Tourist visas are the easiest way to get into the country.

Said that “there is a small group of unwanted, hiding in a large group.” Not very interested in Sessions bill.)

14. Aides of Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) Cosponsor of AgJOBS, S. 1645. Met with Erik Flooded, Legislative Assistant and Mark (no card) to the Senator.

(Polite, listened, took notes and asked to have more info sent to them on AgJOBS.)

15. Aides of Senator Peter Fitzgerald (R-IL) Cosponsor of AgJOBS, S. 1645. Met with Gregg Gross, Chief of Staff to the Senator.

He wrote down Mark’s and Carl’s name, and was the first to really look at their pictures. Said the Senator was leaving office and that this issue was not a “smoking gun this year, but would be next year. Said some amendments were needed. Took a phone call, talked about his girlfriend who was in NY on 9/11, Said the Senator thinks that AgJOBS is a way to integrate immigrants. Said that they don’t usually talk to non-constituents, but that they would always talk to 9/11 families. Told us not to quit. To keep up the fight.)

Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH) Cosponsor both AgJOBS, S.1645 and Dream Act, S.1545.

I MISSED THIS MEETING, BRUCE WENT ON HIS OWN. I NEEDED A BREAK, MY LEGS WERE CRAMPING !!)

16. Aides of Senator John Edwards (D-NC) Cosponsor of both AgJOBS, S.1645 and Dream Act, S.1545. Met with Stephanie Jones, Counsel for the Senator.

(She was Pleasant, asked questions, listened, really listened. Didn’t seem interested in Sessions bill. Said there are two issues 1, protect our borders, and 2, legal immigration.)

17. Aides of Senator John Rockefeller (D-WV) Cosponsor AgJOBS, S.1645. Met with John Richards, Counsel for the Senator.

(Was not familiar with Sessions bill, asked what his bill would cost. Said there is NO funding to support Sessions bill, explained that any illegal alien held on a watch list from 1998 or before is now given Amenity, according to an article in Washington Post. (We didn’t see this article. He said that he doesn’t think the Senator would support general amnesty.)

18. Appointment with Senator Trent Lott (R-MS) Cosponsor of AgJOBS, S.1645. We met with the Senator himself and Jim Sartucci, Legislative Director for the Senator.

(The Senator really wanted to meet with us. He looked at the pictures of Mark, and Carl. Asked us a lot of questions. Understood our point of view. Would look into Sessions bill. Said he wrote a chapter in a book about immigration. Said “ every time we have a reform, we make it worse.” He seemed to be on our side. Said that if they(migrant works), came to work and then went back home it would be okay, admitted we have a big problem with immigration. I felt this was the only meeting where someone cared!!!)

19. Aides of Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS) Cosponsor AgJOBS, S.1645. We met with Ashleigh M. de la Torre, Legislative Assistant to the Senator.

(She was polite and listened to us. She agreed that there are problems with immigration. She was worried about the safety of our food supplies. Said the illegal aliens “do not get the benefits that people think they do.” Said we need to find something that everyone agrees on, and that amnesty is not the answer. And that the Senator wants to be part of the illegal alien solution, not the problem. Money is the bottom line. She asked questions about Sessions bill and said she would show it to the Senator.)

20. Aides of Senator Conrad Burns (R-MT) Cosponsor of AgJOBS, S.1645. We met with Jennifer Owen, Chief of Agriculture and Jim McCray, General Counsel for the Senator.

(Both staff members were listening at first, they became rude, condescending and defensive. Told us that we are going about lobbying the wrong way. Jim said we should be writing letters to the Senators asking why the present immigration laws are not being enforced. Jennifer said that we need a specific point, not both immigration and drivers licenses. Jennifer appeared to be controlling laughter by holding her hand over her mouth. She sarcastically remarked "didn't President Bush sign into law something about drivers licenses today?" She also said that "The Senator does not think this bill is as irresponsible as we do and that "we just have to disagree with you on this bill." "Sorry for your loss.") I felt like we were being mocked through the whole meeting.

21. Aides of Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) Cosponsor both AgJOBS, S.1645 and Dream Act, S. 1545. We met with Mark Rupp.

(He was polite and listened. Agreed with some of our views, will pass on to the Senator.)

22. Aides of Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) Met with Michael L. Szymanski, Legislative Assistant to the Senator.

(He was very polite and said that at this time the Senator is not Cosponsoring any of the bills. He listened to us and said that he would present our "cause" to the Senator.)

23. Appointment with Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) Cosponsor both AgJOBS, S.1645 and Dream act, S. 1545. We met with the Senator.

(She was on the run, she said that "you don't have to tell me your stories, we lost a lot of Californians since the planes were coming to L.A. She is interested in protecting our ports, rails, and food. She believes illegals should earn amnesty. Said "I am tough on security and touch on enforcing laws.") She then left the room and the meeting ended. She had her aide put together some information.)

24. Aides of Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) Cosponsor of both AgJOBS, S.1645 and Dream Acts, S. 1545. We met with Mary Beth LaVerghetta, Legislative Correspondent to the Senator.

(She was polite and listened. She asked questions about Sessions bill Said the Senator was looking more to a Guest work program, saying that the company must prove that it can not employ the domestic force first, before visas are granted. She understood our views and was willing to present them to the Senator)

25. Aides of Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) Cosponsor AgJOBS, S.1645. We met with David Montez

(He was polite, listened to our concerns. Said he was not aware of the history of the hijackers of 9/11. He asked some questions and said he would present our concerns to the Senator.)