

The Nation

9/11 Families Urge Immigration Time out to 'Fix System'

By Steve Brown

CNSNews.com Staff Writer

October 08, 2003

(CNSNews.com) - The current U.S. immigration system cannot differentiate between a terrorist and a tourist. That's the message from the father of a Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack victim in a new ad campaign seeking an across-the-board immigration time out until a more secure system can be implemented.

"The fact is that the American public is not much safer today than it was before Sept. 11," David Ray, spokesman for Nine Eleven Families for a Secure America (FSA), told CNSNews.com. "Our immigration system is in rapid meltdown, and Congress is poised to consider an illegal alien amnesty and a massive guest worker program while the public is demanding less, not more, immigration."

The [ad campaign](#) was launched Oct. 6 and features Peter Gadiel of Hartford, Conn., whose son, Jamie, perished at the World Trade Center on Sept. 11. Featuring photos of Jamie in the ad, Peter explains that it was created to call attention to the country's "lax" immigration system and suggests that Americans "will never feel safe" without a complete overhaul of it.

"Jamie and all the victims of 9/11 deserve that," Gadiel says at the ad's conclusion.

According to an FSA release, the ad campaign targets the Virginia market due to its many international points of entry coupled with the fact that it supplied 9/11 hijackers with driver's licenses used to board the commercial airplanes used in the attacks. Soon after the attacks, Virginia lawmakers toughened their licensing regulations to prevent a repeat attack. Yet Ray emphasized the need for action at the federal level.

"We have yet to get our house in order. There are eight million illegal aliens roaming the country, and Congress is considering strapping the new Department of Homeland Security, which is barely on its feet, with new, complicated, flawed programs that are going to increase, not decrease, immigrant admissions," Ray said.

"There is a complete disconnect between the American public and their elected officials

on the immigration issue," Ray added. "Congress really needs to wake up. Apparently, 9/11 wasn't enough."

However, immigration advocates disagree.

"Was Timothy McVeigh an illegal alien? He was a terrorist. Let's put terrorists in one category, and let's put immigrants in another. There's a big difference, and if you can't tell the difference, you certainly don't have any business being in Congress or trying to run this country," Brent Wilkes, national executive director of the League of United Latin American Citizens, told **CNSNews.com**.

"There's a huge difference between terrorists and immigrants, and the folks who are trying to lump them together just want to punish immigrants. They're distracting the country from focusing on terrorists," Wilkes said.

Support for worker programs and amnesty is getting louder, as evidenced by the recent [Immigration Workers Freedom Ride](#). Sponsored by pro-immigration advocates, labor unions and religious organizations, the ride crisscrossed the nation Sept. 20 through Oct. 4, culminating in a rally in New York City. Speakers at the event included Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.), who likened it to the civil rights movement of the 1960s and the Freedom Ride by Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1961.

"When I was 21 years old, I got on a bus in Washington, D.C. There were 13 of us. We traveled to the South to bring down those signs that say 'white man' and 'colored man,' 'white women' and 'colored women,'" Lewis was quoted as saying in the *Los Angeles Times*. "In 1961, 42 years ago, we won."

Immigrant workers will "win" today, Lewis said, because "you are right." King would also be "very proud" of them, he added.

"No human being in the sight of God is illegal," Rev. James Lawson, a 1961 Freedom Rider, said, as quoted in the *Los Angeles Times*. "No human being in the sight of God is undocumented."

But Ray countered that amnesty and guest worker programs opened cracks that allowed terrorists to enter the country along with workers.

"The same open border that admits million of illegal aliens is the same border that makes us susceptible to terrorists," Ray said. "We know absolutely nothing about the millions of illegal aliens in the country right now. The only thing we can be certain of is that they willingly violated federal immigration laws in coming here.

"It's the huge pool of illegal aliens in the country that provides the sea in which terrorists can come, establish their identities and remain in the U.S. undetected," Ray said.

[Listen to audio for this story.](#)

[E-mail a news tip to Steve Brown.](#)

[Send a Letter to the Editor about this article.](#)

Copyright 1998-2001, Cybercast News Service