

Politics

9/11 Victims' Families Demand Immigration Policy Changes

By Steve Brown

CNSNews.com Staff Writer

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(CNSNews.com) - On the eve of the second anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, victims' relatives blamed President Bush, Bill Clinton and Congress for immigration policies they said allowed the terrorists to enter the country and execute their plan.

At a Capitol Hill news conference Wednesday, members of the 9/11 Families for Secure America (FSA) said they will no longer be ignored by politicians who they say care more about their own careers than the lives of legal American citizens.

"Members of Congress of both parties who oppose immigration reform have made individual political calculations and decided that what is necessary for the security of our country might, in the short run, cost them the support of organized special interests," said Peter Gadiel, whose son, James, was killed in the World Trade Center.

"Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, President Bush stood on the ruins of the World Trade Center, the only tomb my son will ever know, and said, 'I hear you,'" Gadiel continued. "Well, Mr. Bush, with your refusal to support immigration reform, you've shown you haven't heard us."

Gadiel also singled out individual members of Congress, saying: "Misters (Sen. Tom) Daschle (D-S.D.), (Sen. John) Kerry (D-Mass.), (Sen. Joseph) Lieberman (D-Conn.), (Sen. Robert) Graham (D-Fla.), (Democratic presidential candidate and ex-Vermont Gov. Howard) Dean, you haven't heard us. We're serving notice on you here today that we will be heard."

Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-Colo.), an advocate of immigration policy reform, said Gadiel's son and other 9/11 victims died because "our government couldn't tell a terrorist from a tourist and still cannot," he charged.

FSA member Lynn Faulkner, who lost his wife in the World Trade Center attack of 2001, noted that the Sept. 11 assault was the second - a reference to the 1993 bombing at the twin towers.

"Reasonable people would expect that public officials, having seen the catastrophe that resulted from failure to secure our borders, would have learned from the experience and tightened our security," said Faulkner. "Instead, Congress and President Clinton continue(d) the same dangerous open borders policies and kept Americans vulnerable to anyone who wanted to attack us."

Faulkner also had sharp words for those who followed the Clinton administration, saying: "Even today, politicians who favored the policies that contributed to these attacks show they have learned nothing at all from either 1993 or 2001...they want more amnesties for more millions of lawbreakers."

The anger showed through in some of Faulkner's comments when he said: "We say without any reservation that the members of Congress, the current president and his two predecessors contributed to the murder of my son and the thousands of other victims of September 11."

FSA member Grace Godshalk, whose son was also killed at the World Trade Center, decried Democrat Calif. Gov. Gray Davis's recent decision to allow illegal aliens to have driver's licenses, pointing out that the 9/11 terrorists - who were all here illegally - all had obtained driver's licenses from states, including Virginia.

"I'd like to thank Gov. Davis of California, because up until last week (when he signed the bill into law), how many people in this country knew that illegal immigrants were getting driver's licenses?" Godshalk asked.

Godshalk also accused Davis of using the controversial legislation "as apolitical tool to escape being recalled, passing a bill that he had turned down many times because now he's in jeopardy shows you how political this is."

The immigration debate has been marked by accusations of racism leveled at those pushing for tighter controls, a claim Godshalk strongly disputed. "Those who oppose us resort to calling us 'anti-immigrant' or 'racist,'" Godshalk said. "This is just a lie. We are not anti-immigrant. We are pro-security."

According to Godshalk, one of the 13 members of the FSA board is an immigrant, while most of the others are children or grandchildren of immigrants.

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