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Jim Spencer's column about the press conference attended by families of victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks is a collection of distortions. He edited what we said to twist our meaning, left out important parts of our statements, and then ridiculed what he claims we said.

He says we "replaced the politics of multiculturalism with the politics of fear." He ignored our statement that of the 13 board members of 9-11 Families for a Secure America, one is Hispanic, one was married to a Hispanic immigrant who died on 9/11, one is African-American, and one is an immigrant herself. All but two are the children or grandchildren of immigrants.

His attempt to associate us with a belief in "conspiracy theories" (beyond that of the hijackers themselves) as the cause of 9/11 is vicious and false. We merely state the fact that failure to enforce the laws regarding applicants for visas and the laws barring immigration without background checks contributed in a major way to the deaths of our loved ones, and that many groups - such as employers of illegals - profit from this migration and have successfully lobbied Congress to allow it to continue.

He ridicules our opposition to the issuance of driver's licenses to illegal aliens, people who are criminals the moment they enter the U.S. He chooses to ignore the fact that nearly all the terrorists used such licenses as the supposedly valid ID that got them on the planes on 9/11, and that these licenses were the keys to entering American society that allowed them to live freely in this country while they planned, rehearsed and carried out their conspiracy.

Our opposition to illegal immigration is due to the fact that an illegal is a person whose identity has never been established and background never checked for terrorist or criminal activities.

PETER GADIEL

The writer is a board member for 9-11 Families for a Secure America.

