

# The Washington Times

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## Lax immigration laws blamed for 9/11 deaths

By James G. Lakely

Published September 11, 2003

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Federal officials "contributed to the murders" of those killed in the September 11 attacks by failing to tighten immigration laws, relatives of some victims said yesterday.

Members of "9/11 Families for a Secure America" and Rep. Tom Tancredo, Colorado Republican, used the second anniversary of the hijackings that killed more than 3,000 people in New York City, the Pentagon and Pennsylvania to make their point.

"All the 9/11 family members know that their loved ones died because the government failed to live up to its most basic obligation to its citizens: to protect them from foreign attack," said Peter Gadiel, whose son was killed at the World Trade Center. "I say on behalf of my son and the other 3,000 dead and their families, that not only is Congress guilty of contributing to these deaths, but, unwilling to enact reforms, you will have on your hands the blood of the victims of the next 9/11."

The lobbying group and Mr. Tancredo have been pushing for tighter immigration laws since the attacks, and lamented the lack of progress. They blamed Congress, President Bush, his father, and former President Bill Clinton for failing to offer "leadership in securing our borders."

They attributed the lack of legislative action to monitor and control the flow of the estimated 10 million illegal immigrants in the United States to a powerful pro-immigration lobby and "unscrupulous business people" who profit from cheap immigrant labor.

"Those who oppose us resort to calling us anti-immigrant or racist. This is just a lie," said Grace Godshalk, whose son phoned from the south tower of the World Trade Center minutes before the second plane smashed into the building, striking a few floors below him.

"We are not anti-immigrant. We are pro-security," she said. "The open-borders interest groups have proven their willingness to sacrifice the security of all Americans and the lives of thousands for the purposes of their own gain."

In an e-mail sent out yesterday, the National Immigration Forum decried the "use of the second anniversary of the September 11 attacks to drum up support for nativist immigration policies."

Frank Sharry, executive director of the National Immigration Forum, said connecting the 19 hijackers to "hard-working Mexicans" who want to come to the United States was a manipulation of the immigration debate.

"Let's just say that what's needed is a reasoned and serious debate about solutions, and appeals to fear and emotion go in the opposite direction," Mr. Sharry said. "We have to isolate terrorists, not America."

Mr. Sharry said the solution to stemming illegal immigration and protecting the United States from terrorists is to be found in closer monitoring of immigrants, not sealing off the

border.

"Finding [more] legal channels for immigrants so that they are screened and we know who's here is the better way to go," Mr. Sherry said. "If we think that the inspector at Dulles airport is the front line of the war on terrorism, we've already lost."

Mr. Tancredo said several of the September 11 hijackers had gained entry to the United States on student visas and "melted into society" thanks to lax monitoring of their status by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the schools they were supposed to be attending.

"Why, after all this time, have we ignored the front door of homeland security? Politics." Mr. Tancredo said. He said Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge told him "political and cultural problems" prevent the United States from stationing the National Guard at the borders.

Mrs. Godshalk said Mr. Bush's request to Congress for \$87 billion to help secure and rebuild Iraq was a sign that priorities are out of order.

"Bring back our troops. Secure our borders," she said.

California Gov. Gray Davis, Democrat, also came under attack for signing a bill that would allow illegal aliens to obtain driver's licenses, what Mr. Tancredo called "the keys to the kingdom."

"This is idiotic," Mr. Tancredo said. "Are we going to allow every locality to come up with its own immigration policy?"

Mr. Tancredo said he has introduced a bill that would cut off federal highway aid to any state that issues driver's licenses to illegal immigrants. He said he will contact state attorneys general to "tell them of the dangers of such policies."

Mr. Gadiel said the new California policy may make that state's licenses invalid as identification for air travel. "If people in California can no longer get on airplanes, they will see that it is a good idea to get rid of that law," he said.