

# Let's pull together and get a handle on immigration

By Rep. Bob Inglis

If fences make good neighbors, America is getting downright chummy to the south. The National Guard is there; private sector engineers are bringing American ingenuity to bear; and the Border Patrol is psyched. America is beginning to get a handle on its southern border.

"This is great," the Border Patrol agent said as we drove past the National Guard unit and turned onto a dirt road leading

to the 90-foot Boeing test tower. "You get to see it all in one stop — Border Patrol, National Guard and the new technology." For this South Carolinian experiencing the heat and punishing vastness of the desert border for the first time, a single stop sounded like a good idea.

The 90-foot tower is part of a 28-mile \$20 million test that could turn into a 2,000-mile \$8 billion deployment of American ingenuity.

"Our current sensors detect motion, and we go out into the

desert and find a deer, a cow or a rancher," the Border Patrol agent explained. "When the radar on these Boeing towers detects motion, the day camera or the night camera will focus on the spot, the images will be sent by microwave to the Tucson Section headquarters, and an operator will make the call as to how to respond — depending on whether it's a small or large group of illegal crossers or an armed band of drug smugglers."

The Border Patrol apprehends 1 million illegal entrants

per year along our southern border. Of those, 90 percent are thought to be entering for economic opportunities. The other 10 percent are criminals — drug smugglers or worse. For years the Border Patrol has been pleading for help. Finally, they're getting it.

Under President Bush's leadership radiation detectors have been installed at border crossings. All vehicles and train cars are being scanned for dirty

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## GUEST COLUMN

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bombs. The National Guard is building vehicle barriers in the desert, double fences in urban areas and patrol roads throughout. They're also helping to track down illegal entrants.

Much remains to be done. At Imperial Beach near San Diego the most flimsy of fences provides the Border Patrol with little help in controlling the flow of illegal entrants. Questionable environmental claims have prevented the National Guard from constructing a double fence and patrol road across "Smuggler's Gulch," a notorious crossing for human smugglers just one

small mountain inland from the beach.

Fences are fine, but they won't be enough unless we figure out what's gone wrong in the interior. People are justifiably upset with Congress and with the president for our failure to address the problem of illegal immigration. We need to:

- Turn off the magnet that draws illegal workers to jobs by requiring employers to verify Social Security numbers.

- Make sure that only citizens get the benefit of social programs.

- Stress the importance of English as our language of common culture and commerce.

- Subject entry into this country to the rule of law.

We also need to find the

right funnel to regulate the flow of immigrants into America. The cone of the funnel needs to be open enough to hold out the hope of legitimate entry to those "yearning to breathe free." The tube of the funnel needs to be restrictive enough to assure assimilation.

For too long, folks have been spilling over the top of the funnel so we've got an estimated 12 million illegal immigrants here. The Senate bill contemplates collecting up the 12 million and putting them back through the funnel. Those who pass a background check, pay back taxes and a \$1,000 fine could get a Z visa and live and work in the United States indefinitely. Those choosing to take the harder road to citi-

zenship would have to obtain first a green card by "touching back" in their home country, paying an additional \$4,000 fine and proving proficiency in English. Then, after an 8 to 13 year wait, they would become eligible to take the test for citizenship.

While most agree that the green card/citizenship path entails significant penalties for lawlessness, many see the Z visa as "amnesty." Higher fines, a requirement to return home to apply and a community service requirement could add appropriate consequences to the Z visa path. Moreover, the Z visa should be changed from an indefinite stay to something more like the 6-year stay proposed in the House by Jeff Flake (R-AR) and

Luis Gutierrez (D-IL). Their House bill would keep immigrants from languishing in an indefinite, European-style temporary worker program by putting them to a choice at the end of 6 years: go home or get on the harder path to green card/citizenship.

Porous fences, wrong-sized funnels, distracted politicians, profiting businesses and complicit consumers have led us to erode the rule of law. We can fix the problem with action at the border, incentives that draw illegal immigrants into compliance, assistance from employers, enforcement in the interior, and consequences for wrongdoing. All of those things can be done if we pull together rather than pulling apart.