

THE ALIEN FILE

Immigration Reform Where The Candidates Stand

Q NOW THAT THE PRIMARIES are over, how can I find out more information about where the candidates stand on immigration reform? Do you think there is any hope that under either President Barack Obama or President John McCain we will get some relief for those who have overstayed their visits but who are productive hard-working members of our communities, contributing to our Gaelic games, Irish language, and Catholic schools?

A EVEN IN THIS DAY of extensive campaign websites covering nearly every possible issue, unfortunately the websites do not even begin to give a good picture of where these two presidential candidates have been or where they are heading on the issue of immigration. A good source for all the issues, including immigration, is ontheissues.org which even has

jobs that employers could not fill (think farm-workers, nannies, nurses, and some tech workers). He believes the current filing fees are too high and

immigrants already in the country. He also voted to allow illegal aliens to participate in Social Security and to allow more foreign workers into the



Susanna I Bogue is Of Counsel to Christopher A Kerosky of Kerosky & Associates which handles immigration, construction, civil, and deportation matters since the 1980s with offices in San Francisco, San Jose, and Sacramento. To contact Susanna Bogue regarding legal services call (415) 243-VISA.

Questions of general interest will be answered in this column which is co-written by Susanna Bogue and Chris Kerosky. Send your questions to Susanna by e-mail to sib@justimmigration.com or write Susanna Bogue, PO Box 22261, San Francisco, CA 94122-0261. The advice in this article is general in nature, so consult an immigration attorney for specific problems.

wants to reduce them as well as to provide grants to states to promote US citizenship.

During the debates Obama said "It is important that we fix the legal immigration system, because right now we've got a

US for farm work.

**Republican Candidate:
John McCain**

McCain's website only refers to "Border Security." There is no mention of his walking the walk by co-authoring the first

links to actual speeches made by the candidates.

**Democratic Candidate:
Barack Obama**

Obama's website indicates he is for comprehensive immigration reform ("CIR," a catchphrase used to include many different facets of immigration reform, including usually border security and some path to citizenship, an example of CIR would be the failed 2006 McCain-Kennedy bill). It goes on to say that he favors a system which would allow undocumented immigrants to pay a fine, learn English, stay out of trouble, and go to the back of the new line for an opportunity to become a US citizen. It does not mention that he voted in favor of building a 700 mile fence along the US-Mexico border.

Obama's website also fails to mention that the candidate has been quoted as saying "And I remember May Day 2006, when I marched shoulder-to-shoulder with the Hispanic community to stand up for comprehensive immigration reform."

According to About.com's immigration page Obama supported last year's failed CIR bill which would have kept families together and allowed new workers to enter legally to work

backlog that means years for people to apply legally. What's worse is, we keep on increasing the fees, so that if you've got a hard working immigrant family, they've got to hire a lawyer; they've got to pay thousands of dollars in fees."

According to About.com, Obama says it is "just not practical" to ship back 12 million undocumented immigrants. Instead, he believes in a "pathway to citizenship" for immigrants in good standing. Obama would have undocumented immigrants pay a fine, learn English, and go "to the back of the line" behind those already in the system legally.

Barack Obama has recently chosen his running mate, Senator Joe Biden. An overview of Biden's immigration policies and plans shows us that he and Obama seem to share the same views.

Joe Biden on Immigration

Biden also voted in favor of the 2007 CIR bill. About.com quotes Biden as saying "our immigration system is broken and we have an obligation to work on it until we fix it." Like Obama, Biden also wants a "practical" solution for the undocumented workers currently in the US. He supports earned citizenship for illegal

CIR bill with Senator Ted Kennedy which would have created a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. During the primary he has made it clear that border security must come first and he has distanced himself from his own bill to the point where during one of the debates he said he would not vote for his own 2006 McCain Kennedy bill, although in another debate he said he would sign his bill if it came to him as president.

Many of the (Republican) candidates during the debates described illegal immigrants as not much more than a plague upon the land. McCain, on the other hand, referred to the undocumented as "God's children" and he defended the contributions of Hispanics in the US as a reminder to Republicans to keep the rhetoric from getting overheated. In a *Vanity Fair* profile, he said of the border fence, "But I'll build the god-damned fence if they want it."

John McCain has recently chosen his running mate, Governor Sarah Palin. Unfortunately, a quick search on Google indicates that Palin's immigration policies and plans are unknown so we do not yet know if she shares the same views as McCain.