

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, May 12, 2005

"Bonner Plan" Considered by

House Immigration Subcommittee

WASHINGTON, DC - The House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Claims held a hearing today on legislation sponsored by Congressman David Dreier (R-CA), the Illegal Immigration Enforcement and Social Security Protection Act of 2005, H.R. 98. Also known as the Bonner Plan, the legislation would establish standards for a counterfeit proof Social Security card and enhance employer sanctions for knowingly hiring illegal immigrants. Dreier thanked the subcommittee for their attention to the legislation and for the commitment to finding workable solutions to the problem of illegal immigration. He was joined by the bill's original co-sponsor, Congressman Silvestre Reyes (D-TX), a former border patrol agent, and T.J. Bonner, the President of the National Border Patrol Council and the progenitor of the ideas included in the legislation.

"To date, most of our efforts to stop illegal immigration have targeted the supply side of the equation," Dreier said. "What T.J., Silvestre, and I propose is that the United States government target demand instead. The only way to begin to control the illegal immigration influx is to create conditions by which those immigrants will not desire to enter the country illegally in the first place. We believe this plan will help accomplish that."

The Bonner Plan will require the Social Security Administration (SSA) to issue Social Security Cards that contain a photo of the cardholder on the card, as well as an encrypted electronic identification strip, unique to that individual. The new technology will allow employers to access a new Employment Eligibility database created by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for information relating to the applicant's true identity and legal status. Additionally, the Bonner Plan includes a \$50,000 penalty for employers that knowingly hire illegal immigrants who do not pass the scrutiny of the Employment Eligibility database. It also makes the hiring of a known illegal worker a federal offense punishable by up to 5 years in prison per count. U.S. citizens and legal immigrants will be required to furnish the card only when seeking new employment in the United States. They are not in any way required to carry the card at all times, as would be required by a national identification card. In fact, the legislation contains specific language stating that it is the policy of the U.S. that the social security card not be used as a national identification card. The bill authorizes the sums necessary to the SSA and the DHS to carry out the activities required in the Act, 10,000 new Homeland Security personnel whose sole job will be to enforce employer compliance, and \$100 million to the DHS to enforce compliance by employers and prosecute violations of the

Act. More information on the Bonner Plan can be found at
<http://dreier.house.gov/issues/bonner.htm>

###