

opinion

Simpson/Mazzoli is solution to nothing

It's probably a form of flattery when a large number of people are interested in one person's vote, although it's doubtful that Rep. Jim Weaver is enjoying the attention he's received over his recent vote on the Simpson/Mazzoli bill.

That bill, sponsored by Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo. and Rep. Romano Mazzoli, D-Ken., and strongly supported by Pres. Ronald Reagan, is intended to allow the United States to maintain some "control of our own borders," Reagan has said.

It would strengthen the Immigration and Naturalization Service and increase the amount of U.S. border patrols on the 2,000-mile Mexican border. It would provide amnesty for certain aliens, allowing them to eventually claim U.S. residency, and it would require employers to document that employees are legal U.S. residents.

If signed into law, the bill also would allow farmers to import migrants to pick crops in danger of rotting on the vine because no other laborers will pick them.

These are the highlights of the bill that narrowly passed in the House 216-211 in June. Amendments have given it a different look than the bill that swept through the Senate in May 1983, so much so that co-sponsor Simpson says he cannot accept it as is.

The Simpson/Mazzoli bill is a bill that seems to satisfy no one. According to Time magazine, "Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals, business organizations and union leaders have lined up on both sides. Amendments have switched the AFL-CIO from strong initial support to last-minute opposition."

Indeed, the House vote breaks down to 125 Democrats and 91 Republicans for the bill; 138 Democrats and 73 Republicans opposed.

Weaver was one of the 125 Democrats supporting the bill, and his vote has raised the ire of the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon. The ACLU says Weaver made up his mind at the last minute to vote for the bill probably because he believed nothing better was attainable.

A Weaver spokesperson said that the congressman considered it the best of several alternatives and that the potential existed for worse legislation. So Weaver voted for Simpson/Mazzoli because he believed something had to be done about the illegal alien situation. But the ACLU disagrees.

Because the bill that passed the House is so different than what passed the Senate, a conference committee has been created to reconcile the differences. And the ACLU is intent on changing Weaver's vote before a final vote is taken.

Weaver generally sides with the ACLU on issues and is considered a friend, says David Fidanque, the Oregon ACLU associate director in Eugene. "We don't want to hit (Weaver) over the head with this, but we do want to send a message," Fidanque says.

As it now stands, the bill hardly seems to be in the best interest of most of the people in this country or in Mexico. Not only is it futile to enact legislation that is surrounded with a cloud of confusion, but there are potentially dangerous repercussions.

Instead of fussing over the stream of illegal aliens, most of whom perform jobs already turned down by U.S. citizens, the INS will be forced to spend a disproportionate amount of time chasing down counterfeit identification, a job some consider outside the agency's capabilities.

Instead of more than one million illegal aliens — some estimates place the number in excess of six million — stepping forward to claim legal status, there's a possibility most will shun the opportunity. The documentation required to obtain residency probably exceeds that of most aliens, so stepping forward may invite deportation. And those who do claim residency and meet the requirements may find the Internal Revenue Service is waiting to claim back taxes.

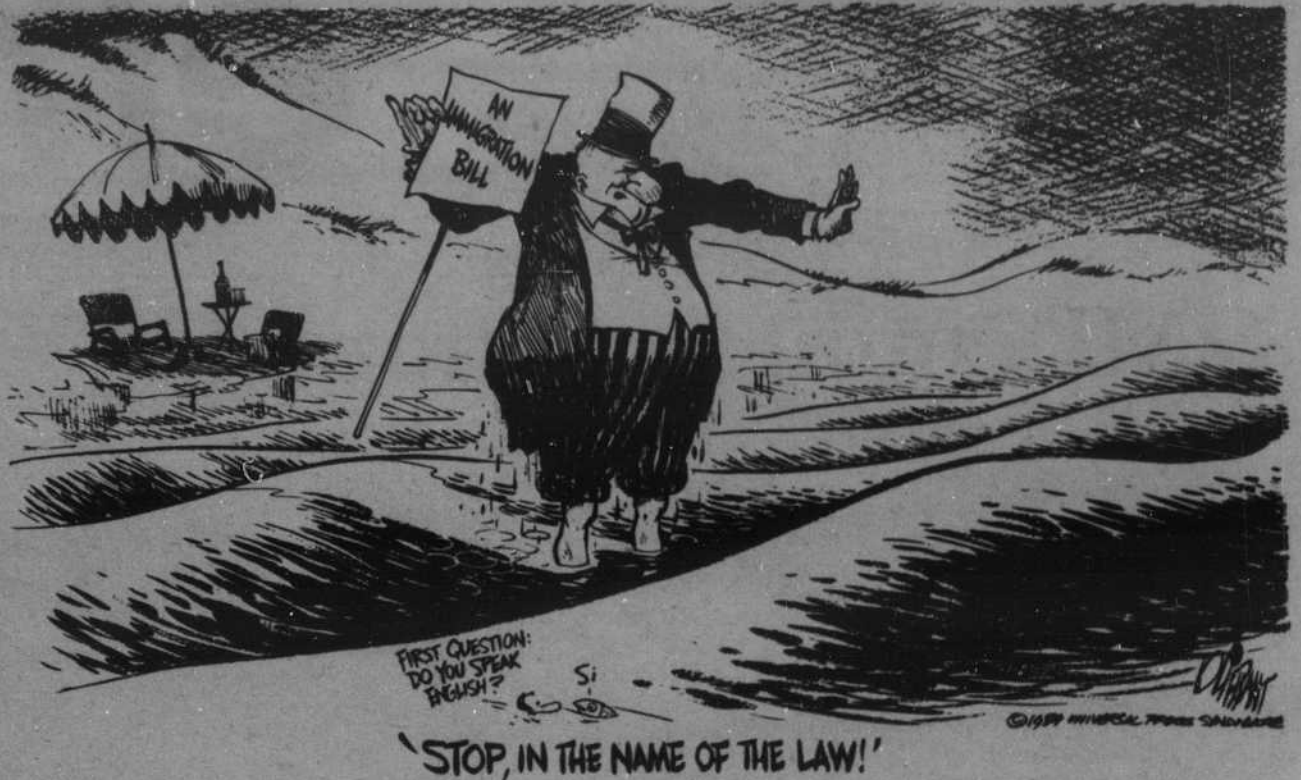
Worst of all, the provision allowing migrant workers to be imported could be abused and those workers could be exploited. Opposition to this provision is so broad-based as to include Simpson, the AFL-CIO and Cesar Chavez, president of the United Farm Workers.

One fear is that the imported workers will face conditions even worse than what now exist. While crop pickers have few options now, they will have virtually no options under the provision. Chavez reportedly referred to it as a "rent-a-slave" program.

With so many negative aspects built into the bill and with no better argument in favor of it than that it beats alternative bills, we must concur with the ACLU.

Our message to Weaver is clear: vote no on Simpson/Mazzoli.

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letters

Review offends

Douglas Pyle's opinion of the Carnival Theatre's current production of "Side by Side by Sondheim" demonstrates once again that obscenity can be the unlikely fellow of beauty and truth insofar as they are usually in the mind of the beholder.

To take a fleeting moment from the show which he found in poor taste and make it the principle thrust of his remarks suggests he, too, knows how to offend.

As a member of the Carnival Theatre production organization it is inappropriate for me to offer counter opinions. I am biased, of course. Perhaps you will admit to a few items of evidence.

Stephen Sondheim is usually thought of as the wittiest lyricist since Frank Loesser and the two of them need share that distinction perhaps only with W.S. Gilbert in the entire history of popular musical theatre.

Janet Descutner's reputation as a presenter and master of dance is well established and will not be tarnished by Mr. Pyle's inability to see its simple grace and appropriateness.

The musicianship of those assembled for the production is first-rate by any standards. Jerry Williams is a nationally recognized scenic and easel artist whose muted and slightly impressionistic displays of the internationally famous posters of Sondheim's shows strove to capture a nostalgic mood designed and expected of the writers of the review.

If one is indisposed to the

concept to the "show review" format, gentle and straightforward presentment or intricate and witty theatre tunes, then the piece is not for them. All others are welcome to form their own opinions, which I hope will be shared with a whistle of delight.

Faber DeChaine
Professor of theatre
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Slavery illegal

In the letter by Professor Rice printed July 17 he concluded with a comment suggesting America shared a rapport with the USSR on the subject of slave labor. I believe that in his attempt to make a point about the exchange program, Rice has not fully considered the comparison he has made.

Although the United States has deplorable actions in its history, specifically the practice of legal slavery, such actions are eventually viewed as deviations from the basic principles on

which this country was founded.

While the United States was founded upon the ideas of individual liberty and human rights, the guiding philosophy of the USSR has always been that whatever accomplishes the goals of the Soviet state is moral, with the corollary that the citizens are the chattel of the state.

Slavery has been outlawed in the United States for a century, while slave labor camps are still active in the USSR and will be as long as the principles behind the regime remain unchanged. Even if there are similar occurrences in the histories of the two nations, one must look deeper to see how such actions relate to the basic ideas behind the foundations. I fail to see how there can be a rapport between two such opposing views about slavery.

Gary L. Johnson
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letters policy

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Letters to the editor must be limited to 250 words, typed, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, style or content.

Letters to the editor should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300, EMU.

oregon daily emerald

The summer edition of the Oregon Daily Emerald is published Tuesdays and Thursdays, except during exam week and vacations, by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices on the third floor of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

News and Editorial 686-5511
Display Advertising and Business 686-3712
Classified Advertising 686-4343
Production 686-4381
Circulation 686-5511

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Thursday, July 26, 1984