



## "On the Record" interview with former House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA)

Wednesday, May 5, 2010

**MS. VAN SUSTEREN:** Tonight, former House speaker Newt Gingrich, right here, right now. Good evening, Mr. Speaker

**MR. GINGRICH:** Good evening.

**MS. VAN SUSTEREN:** Mr. Speaker, there is so many issues on our plate tonight, but let me start first right down in Arizona with immigration. What would you do?

**MR. GINGRICH:** I would pass a comprehensive national immigration bill. I would control the border. I would make English the official language of government. I would make very clear that we are pro legal immigration. I would have a legal guest worker program that was outsourced to American Express, Visa or MasterCard so you didn't have the kind of fraud that you have with the federal bureaucracy.

I would be very tough on American employers because you wouldn't have anybody working illegally if you didn't have employers who were hiring them illegally, so I think there is a program.

What I wouldn't do is blame the people of Arizona, who are frightened, who see their federal government failing totally, and who have had casualties, literally, a local rancher killed, policeman killed, serious problems. So, the answer is not Arizona, the answer is Washington, and the federal government should do its job.

**MS. VAN SUSTEREN:** All right, why won't the federal government do its job? It's not like this problem just arose about a week ago or two weeks ago. People have been talking about immigration, at least going as far back as President Reagan, everyone has been talking about securing the borders, doing all this stuff, but we've got zero done, or almost zero.

**MR. GINGRICH:** You're exactly right. When President Reagan signed the Simpson-Mazzoli immigration bill, which ended up giving amnesty to 3 million people, he wrote in his diary that he signed the bill because we had to get control of the border, we had to get a guest worker program, and we had to make sure employers did not hire people illegally. All three of those promises failed, and I think you have to put blame on both parties for refusing to take seriously the challenges we are faced with. You didn't have under Republicans any real effort to control the border and you don't have under Democrats any real effort to control the border.

What Arizona is telling us is that this problem is now serious enough that we need to confront it, deal with it-- I would hope as a rare break from his normal practice, that the

president would be willing to be genuinely bipartisan and insist on listening to everybody and hammer out a bill, which means, by the way, the labor unions have to accept a large guest worker program and a large 401-B visa program, both of which the labor unions have opposed. It means that the right has to accept some path, not to citizenship, but to legality for people who are in the United States.

I think this will be a very contentious issue, but I think it's got to be done in a way which brings people together and not ignore it any longer. The answer is not to attack Arizona, the answer is to solve the problem in Washington.

**MS. VAN SUSTEREN:** All right, now, there is no secret to who is running the government now. The Democratic Party has the White House, the House and the Senate, so they've got all the authority to sort of drive this engine. Do you see anything coming out of any of those three entities to show a serious commitment to resolving illegal immigration problem?

**MR. GINGRICH:** No. what we've seen so far has been a very cynical and deliberately political effort to turn the immigration debate into an effort to isolate Republicans from Latinos. It have been totally calculated, it has been signaled for the last two months, and it is frankly fairly, I think disgusting and inappropriate to see the Democrats try to use this issue. This is a serious national problem and it's a problem we ought to address and solve. It has to start with controlling the border, but it has to include a lot more than that. I think we need a comprehensive program.

**MS. VAN SUSTEREN:** Just to be fair, when the Republican Party had the White House, under President Bush 43, did you see any serious commitment to immigration reform, illegal immigration reform?

**MR. GINGRICH:** Well look, I mean, in all fairness, while I disagree with the bill, John McCain and Edward Kennedy did produce a bill, the president did hold a press conference in the rose garden, but the bill collapsed because it was essentially out of touch with the reality of the American people. The same thing will happen again.

There is a rumor that the Democrats may try to pass a bill that gives amnesty to 10 million people and allows them to register as citizens and vote simultaneously. That kind of a bill will shatter the Democratic Party, even more than it's already been hurt by big government and big health care and big deficits. If that's the direction they go in, they will get nothing done.