

BI-PARTISAN THOUGHT CRIME BILL MAY TARGET YOU

On October 23rd, the House voted 404 to 6 passing HR 1955, or The Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007. HR 1955 instructs Department of Homeland Security to create a "center of excellence" located at a yet undecided state university to study, combat, and prevent homegrown terrorism and violent radicalization.

HR 1955 is disconcerting on many different levels. The most obvious concern is the direct conflict with the First Amendment. To many the First Amendment simply means that you can believe and say what you want without getting locked up, but it also means that the government has no business finding out who believes in what; that's the precise reason your vote is supposed to be secret from the government.

Of equal concern is the correlation being made between "homegrown terrorism" and "violent radicalization." It brings us one step closer to the government connecting "terrorism" and "radical politics" and then "terrorism" and "not republicrat." It's a step towards enforcing "thought crime."

Violent radicalization could simply mean that you don't believe corporations should be able to kill for profit, that governments shouldn't sleep with business, and that you are willing to back up your freedom when it's on the line. The only problem is that with our government (all 232 years, not just the last eight), our freedom is always on the line.

State of Disunion

NUMBER OF H-2
workers brought into the
US in 2005:
121,000

NUMBER OF
AMERICAN
COMPANIES
currently using H-2
workers:
15,600

NUMBER OF US
INTELLIGENCE
AGENCIES:
16

NUMBER OF
CONGRESSMEN
that voted for H.R. 1955:
404

NUMBER OF
DOLLARS
Enstroms Candies
executives and
owners have given to
Republican Candidates:
11,500

YEAR
that the H-2 visa
program began:
1942

NUMBER OF
INVESTIGATIONS
that the Department of
Labor launched in 2004
against H-2 employers:
89

ESTIMATED
NUMBER OF
FEDERAL DOLLARS
ALLOCATED
to the CIA in 2007:
1,100,000,000,000

NUMBER OF
CONGRESSMEN
that voted against H.R.
1955:
6

TOTAL NUMBER OF
DOLLARS
Ron Paul has raised in
Mesa County so far:
7,751

* Sources for the State of Disunion can be found at
www.gjredpill.org

CALL TO ACTION

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GRAND JUNCTION,
COLORADO

The Red Pill



AGAINST

APATHY

FEBRUARY 2008

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SLAVERY IN AMERICA: 90 CENTS AN HOUR AND 20F BELOW ZERO

COLORADO SHEEP-RANCHERS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IMMIGRANT WORKERS IN THE BADLANDS OF WYOMING



We had been on the road for hours, leaving the interstate and then digressing to smaller and smaller highways. Differing vistas of the Colorado landscape got wilder and more vacant the further north we drove. Driving through Maybell, we took a right and headed through Irish Canyon, on the road towards Rock Springs, Wyoming. Dropping down into Wyoming, the sage brush flats opened up on either side of the highway. Stretching into the distance and disappearing over the horizon, empty barren land devoid of anything but roads built by the gas companies and herds of sheep tended by imported slave labor.

With us on our journey were three Chilean men who had worked out here for anywhere from a year to three. Brought

straight from their native land on work Visas, they had been promised food, clothing, shelter and a good paycheck to herd sheep on some of the roughest landscape in the west. Unfortunately for them, they did not receive adequate food, clothing, pay or medical attention. All they found were brutal winters with a constant wind that could cut to the bone and sweltering summer heat that

would make a lizard pant. We had originally

expected to find the sheep camps worked by men from Peru, Chile and Ecuador, but the Colorado sheep ranchers had gone even further afield than expected to find workers to take advantage of - Nepal. Walking up to the first sheep camp trailer, my fingers ached to the bone in the cold, dry, wind

"SLAVERY" ON SECOND PAGE

BE THE MEDIA!

"SLAVERY" FROM FIRST PAGE

as I held onto my camera. When no one answered our knock we turned to leave. Riding towards us on horseback was the first of three Nepali men that we found tending sheep in the Wyoming badlands.

Since sheep-herding is most likely the loneliest job within the continental United States, his happiness at visitors was almost overwhelming. In broken English and gestures, he showed us his home. A tiny tin trailer with a bed and wood stove that put out barely any heat. Its window was covered by cardboard and his pantry held nothing but rice, canned beans, tomato sauce, green beans, and a few spices. He kept track of the months by watching the dates change on his carton of eggs. Occasionally he could kill a sheep for food, but the only place to store the meat was in a cardboard box next to his bed. A World War I rifle rested on a small bench next to his bed, a tool to keep predators away from his boss's herd. I had never seen such an ancient rifle outside of a museum. His clothes were ragged and well worn, his boots and gloves were held together by duct tape and his bedding was nothing but a thin sleeping bag and a blanket, hardly fitting clothing and bedding for a part of the country that can see wind chill factors in the negative 20s and whiteouts that can literally spring from nowhere.

The next couple of camps were in much the same shape, little tin trailers that should be condemned; mangy, ragged packs of dogs either starved for attention or cowering. Horses standing with their asses to the wind, shivering in huddled crowds, gaunt ribs showing through their thick winter coats and smiling Nepali men who



were simply joyous to have someone visiting besides an angry boss yelling at them.

As we talked, the true story of abuse and wage slavery came out. These men had signed a contract in Nepal (They are in the U.S. legally on an H2A work Visa) to work eight hours a day, and when they landed in the U.S., the contracts were changed to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with no vacations, ever. Adequate shelter and food were supposed to be supplied, but our own eyes showed us the falsity of that agreement. The biggest crime, however, was the 650 dollars a month these men received as compensation for their labor. When you do the math, 650 dollars a month for 24 hour shifts, 7 days a week comes to 90 cents an hour. You can get paid more in China, hell you could make more money an hour flying a sign on a street corner an hour than you could herding sheep.

These workers are trapped and taken advantage of. One Nepali man who had been alone and isolated on the plains of Wyoming for three years told us, in broken English, how the last visitor he had was an uncle two years before. Then he surprised me when we asked him what changes he would like to see. Laughing and slapping his knee, he answered, "Change? Change this to 21st century, this not 21st century."

An interesting class difference that we came across during our trip was the differences between workers from South America and those that had been imported

from Asia. The last camp we ran into actually contained two men, one from Chile and one from Peru. Their trailers were newer, the dogs and horses were less ragged and worn down. They were also paid one hundred dollars a month more, to me these differences boiled down to language, a lot of people within the U.S. know enough Spanish to ask if you are okay, but good luck finding someone who can speak enough Nepali to see if a workers basic human rights are being met.

The right of a worker to quit his job if his boss is abusive and simply immoral in his employment practices should be an inherent right across the globe. In a truly free market this employer would be forced to change their practices or go out of business from a lack of workers. That is not the case in Colorado and Wyoming when it comes to sheep-herders. Their bosses keep their passports and if the worker wants to



quit and collect his money, he can't. Two of our Chilean guides had quit their jobs as herders and their employers kept every last dime that they had earned. Some men sign a contract for three years, imagine quitting your job after two and half years and not receiving an hours worth of pay after years of aching loneliness and back breaking labor.

One case in particular is a perfect example of the brutal life these men live with, in the legalized slavery that is the H2A visa guest worker program. Jose Alrturo was from Mexico and signed a contract to work legally within the United States herding sheep for a Colorado rancher in the badlands of Northwestern Colorado and Southwestern Wyoming. During his time on horseback in the wild lands, he was bit by a tick carrying a strange form of encephalitis. Each day he grew more and more sick, his boss refused to bring him into town to receive the medical care that he



needed. Several other herders came together in solidarity and managed to bring him to Saint Mary's Hospital in Grand Junction. It was too late however, he was flown to Mexico after several weeks in the hospital and died before he could come to know his newborn child. Stories like these are as common as coyotes in the wind swept, sheep country of Colorado and Wyoming.

Heading out from sheep country, I asked two of our Chilean guides if they still would have come to the U.S. if they would have known what the true work conditions would have been like. They both agreed that they never would have come, work conditions in Chile were better with higher pay and less abuse. The youngest one, Juan, looked into the distance, eyes watering and said, "I never, I never would have come."

A Short video of this trip will be released in a few days. Keep an eye on our website for its release! www.gjredpill.org.



EVERY MONDAY • 5:30pm

A Voice of Reason, the local peace group meets to strategize local actions to end the war in Iraq.

For more info call 245-3720

Saturday & Sunday March 1-2, 2008

7th Annual Local to Global Justice Teach-In

For more info contact:

localtoglobaljustice@yahoo.com
ASU Tempe Campus, Tempe, AZ

Wednesday, March 5th, 2008 • 5PM

Drinking Liberally

Get Together.

Kannah Creek Brewing

12th and Walnut, Grand Junction, CO

SUNDAY MARCH 30th • 2PM

Students for a Democratic Society will hold a anti-war rally and march featuring local music and speakers

For more info or to get involved in organizing call 245-3720