

Right Web

Exposing the architecture of power that's changing our world

Profile



ProjectUSA

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Overview

ProjectUSA is an immigration restrictionist organization whose slogan is: "For a moderate and democratic immigration policy." It advocates: "ending illegal immigration;" "reducing legal immigration to traditional, sustainable levels;" and "a ten-year time-out while the country reassesses immigration in terms of the long-term consequences of the present policy."

"We believe a modern immigration policy will be one that places more importance on the long-term consequences of current policy on our grandchildren, and less importance on the mythologized nation of our grandparents."

While some restrictionist groups insist that immigration flows harm the U.S. economy by taking jobs, lowering wages, and sapping tax revenues, ProjectUSA has adopted a more nationalistic and socially conservative approach. According to ProjectUSA, "We believe the United States is a country, not a market, and we believe a country should do its own work. We believe that it is possible to advocate a moderate immigration policy without being anti-immigrant in the same way it is possible to be on a budget without being anti-money. We believe the advocacy of mass immigration on economic grounds is inherently evil: humans are not packaged goods." (1)

ProjectUSA, directed by Craig Nelsen, is a policy advocacy organization that sponsors anti-immigration faxes to congressional members, produces political ads and billboards in congressional races, and produces an ezine. Its annual budget is, according to a newspaper report, approximately \$70-80,000. (5)

Origins and Impact

Founded in 1999 by Craig Nelsen with support from John Tanton's U.S.Inc, ProjectUSA is closely associated with such other anti-immigration groups as the Center for Immigration Studies, VDARE, and Friends for Immigration Law Enforcement. (6)

According to ProjectUSA, Nelsen founded ProjectUSA after his "eyes were opened to the severe problems associated with overpopulation and the dangerous naiveté of Western universalists."

During the 2004 primary and general elections, ProjectUSA produced radio ads and billboards in five states to support anti-immigration Republican challengers to Republican and Democratic incumbents. Its ads in Iowa warned that Democratic Party candidates, including Rep. Leonard Boswell and Sen. John Kerry, supported legislation that would "give illegal aliens the legal right to take an American job and eventually claim U.S. citizenship."

In Kansas City, Tino Camacho, president of the local chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), called ProjectUSA's billboards "racist" and said that LULAC was demanding that they be taken down "because of the fear that they have created." He

complained that the billboards created the impression that most immigrant workers were undocumented. (5)

ProjectUSA and other immigration groups take credit for the more hard-edged language used by President Bush late in the campaign. ProjectUSA director Craig Nelson expressed his pleasure after Bush criticized Kerry as having "supported amnesty for illegal aliens." Nelson said, "We're pleased the president has incorporated a ProjectUSA billboard into his campaign. But he isn't the only Republican suddenly speaking plain about immigration and using a Democratic opponent's unpopular position on immigration to win votes in an election." (2)

Funding

In addition to receiving funding from John Tanton's U.S. Inc., ProjectUSA has received grants from the Pioneer Fund, a group that promotes eugenics and has long been associated with white supremacist causes. Criticizing ProjectUSA, Rep. Chris Cannon (who has been a target of ProjectUSA's anti-immigrant billboards) told the Salt Lake Tribune that ProjectUSA received grants from Pioneer Fund in the 2000-2002 period. (3) ProjectUSA's billboards charged that Cannon "Wants Amnesty for Illegal Aliens." Cannon took up the fight, telling the National Journal that ProjectUSA and allied anti-immigrant groups

promote an "anti-life" agenda that promotes "sterilization, abortion, eugenics, and euthanasia." Cannon also noted that ProjectUSA's anti-immigrant activities were the result of its mission "to educate the public on population control." ProjectUSA quickly responded that population control has never been its mission, but then retracted its statement after Cannon pointed out that it was the stated mission of the organization as reported to the IRS on its 2002 tax return. (4)

SOURCES

- (1) "About ProjectUSA," ProjectUSA www.projectusa.org/about_projectusa.html
- (2) http://www.projectusa.org/ezine/2004/10-27-bush_adopts_slogan.html
- (3) "Immigration Reform Drives Sharp Wedge in Cannon Race," *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 29, 2004
- (4) "Inside Washington-Gosh Durn Those Precise Accountants," *National Journal*, April 4, 2004
- (5) Brad Cooper, "Latinos Object to Billboards," *Kansas City Star*, October 4, 2004
- (6) www.projectusa.org

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The Right Web

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