

Club Fed for illegal immigrants

Michelle Malkin
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Thanks to their international "human rights" advocates, Gitmo detainees receive art therapy, movie nights and video games at their U.S. taxpayer-funded camp in Cuba. Now, the left's bleeding heart lobby wants to provide similar taxpayer-sponsored perks to illegal alien detainees on American soil. Welcome to the open-borders Club Fed.

According to an internal Department of Homeland Security e-mail obtained by the Houston Chronicle, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency plans a radical overhaul of the immigration detention system. No, the reforms will not increase the nation's measly, chronically underfunded detention bed capacity -- fewer than 35,000 beds last fiscal year to cover an estimated illegal alien population of between 12 million and 20 million. The Obama ICE leadership is headed in the exact opposite direction.

ICE chief John Morton -- the same man who signaled last month that he may refuse to process illegal aliens sent to him by Arizona law enforcement officials -- has already eliminated 50 detention facilities. This despite a DHS inspector general report released last spring exposing the federal government's bipartisan failure to expand detention space capacity to end the dangerous game of illegal alien "catch and release."

Instead, among the p.c. makeover measures under consideration or about to be made by Obama's ICE agency in the next 30 days:

- "Softening" the physical appearance of privately contracted detention facilities with "hanging plants."
- Giving illegal alien detainees e-mail access and free Internet-based phone service.
- Abandoning lockdowns, lights-out, visitor screening and detention uniform requirements.
- Serving fresh veggies and continental breakfast and providing Bingo sessions, arts and crafts classes, and, yes, movie nights.

Ensuring humane treatment of detainees is one thing. This, on the other hand, is beyond ridiculous. Detention centers should be clean, safe and temporary way stations for illegal immigrants on their way out the door. These proposals turn the immigration detention centers into permanent Dave & Buster's-style comfort zones for illegal aliens biding their time until the next amnesty. Dancing lessons? Game halls? This is an invitation for abuse -- and a recipe for exploitation by smugglers and drug cartels. Open-borders and civil liberties activists will end up endangering DHS/ICE workers -- and the rest of us -- under the guise of "immigrant human rights."

The left-wing campaign by the American Civil Liberties Union, change.org and illegal alien activists targeting our detention system began in earnest after 9/11. Under the Bush administration, hundreds of illegal aliens of Arab descent were detained and questioned as "material witnesses" in counterterrorism

probes. The use of immigration laws in the war against Islamic jihadists became a rallying point for the open-borders propagandists.

The New York Times hysterically reported that most of these post-9/11 detainees were held for months without charges. In fact, 60 percent of the 762 immigrants detained after the 9/11 attacks were charged within 72 hours. And the Justice Department inspector general found that there were legitimate reasons for delay in the remaining cases, including logistical disruptions in New York City after 9/11, such as electrical outages, office shutdowns and mail service cancellation that slowed delivery of charging documents. Immigrant abuse charges were hurled recklessly by the likes of Al Gore, who slandered DHS's detention program during a paid appearance in Saudi Arabia -- despite the DOJ's failure to find any such patterns.

The truth got lost along the way. So did common sense. Allowing illegal alien terror suspects to roam free in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks would have been a dereliction of duty. And countless homeland security experts and DHS inspector general reports have repeatedly spotlighted lax enforcement in the detention safety net over the past decade.

Hundreds of thousands of "absconders" remain on the loose because of failure (or refusal) to detain them. The immigration lawyers' racket has lobbied for compassionate "alternatives" to detention that routinely result in deportation fugitives simply ditching the process and disappearing.

Their goal is not to improve detention. Their goal is to sabotage it -- all while law-breakers munch on croissants and joyfully shout "BINGO!"