

# Senate Immigration Bill Draws Mixed Reaction

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very. Now, we work them and send them back home.”

Under that provision, illegal immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for five years or more would eventually be accorded citizenship if they remained employed, passed background checks, paid fines and back taxes, and enrolled in English classes. An estimated seven million people fall in this category.

Undocumented workers who have been here two to five years, about three million people, would have to leave the country briefly and receive a temporary work visa before returning as a guest worker. Eventually, they too could apply for permanent residency.

Illegal immigrants who have been here less than two years, about one million people, would have to leave the country altogether. They could apply for the guest worker program, but there was no guarantee of acceptance.

“This increases the separation between the U.S. and the people of Mexico,” Lawson told **India-**



Aman Kapoor of Immigration Voice is jubilant because the Senate bill contains provisions that will help speed up the processing of the employment-based green card applications.

**West.** “Not only does it treat their people who come here unfairly, but now it builds barriers between the two countries.

“The Senate should be bold enough to recognize Mexico’s economic woes are a result of

U.S. policies (such as free trade) imposed upon Mexico and other parts of the world.”

Others at last week’s rally wondered what effect the criminalization of illegal aliens, a centerpiece of the House bill, would have on women.

“It will deter immigrant women facing domestic violence from calling the police,” Atashi Chakravarty, executive director of Narika, told **India-West**, adding: “Nearly every woman who calls Narika has an immigrant component to her problem.”

Luna Yasui, policy director with the San Francisco-based Chinese for Affirmative Action, blasted the provision in the Senate bill to make English the national language.

“It will have a detrimental effect on the Asian American community,” Yasui asserted, pointing out that 48 percent of the Chinese community has limited proficiency in English, and that those people could miss out on important health messages issued in English.

# Arizona Educator Running For State Treasurer



Rano Singh with some of the main organizers at a recent fund-raiser in Yuba City, Calif. From l to r: Kam Thaker, Sarb Thiara, David Purewal, Rano Singh, Jinder Purewal, Satwant Kaur Bains and Jaswant Bains.

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tion. Petersen has announced he will not be seeking another term.

As of now, only one other person has thrown his hat into the ring — Republican candidate state Sen. Dean Martin. But Singh, unlike Martin, is running as a “clean elections candidate,” which under Arizona law means she will become eligible for public funds if she collects 1,575 five-dollar contributions from the state’s registered voters, as well as \$11,400 as seed money.

“Clean elections takes the special interest money out of the political process,” Singh told **India-West** by telephone. “It’s a wonderful system,” with Arizona being the first state in the nation to pass a Clean Elections Law.

Last week, Singh attended a fund-raiser held for her by a number of supporters from Yuba City, Calif., including Balbir Singh Gill, nephew of Yuba City’s richest peach farmer, Didar Singh Bains. Lead organizer Kam Takhar noted at the event that “Rano has the qualifications, experience and integrity to successfully lead the Office of Arizona state treasurer.” The event netted more than \$10,000.

Singh, who moved from England, where she grew up, to Arizona in 1981, currently serves on Governor Janet Napolitano’s Citizen Finance Review Commission and is vice chair for the City of Phoenix executive committee for the 2006 bond election. She also serves on the advisory board for a new community bank and is the state chairwoman for the U.S. Indian American Chamber of Commerce.

She said she is running for state treasurer because Arizona needs leadership that is non-partisan, which she believes she can provide.

As treasurer, she will have veto powers over the sale of state land. She said one of her visions is to have planned development in the state, instead of the current “rampant development.”

“Our infrastructure needs to support development,” she told **India-West**.

Singh pointed out that because Arizona is a very conservative state, it is important to get her name out quickly. She has already gone a long way in collecting the minimum 4,500 statewide signatures needed to get her name on the ballot.

This will be Singh’s second try at winning an elected office. In 2004, she ran unsuccessfully for a state House seat in a district that was heavily Republican.

“But it was an excellent experience,” she said, noting that she was using it as a “stepping stone” in her bid for state treasurer.

A chemistry teacher at the Estrella Mountain Community College in Avondale, Singh also runs a small business that provides technical services for the biotech industry.

She is married to Surinder Singh, a business manager at Lucent Technologies. The couple has two daughters, Naleena, a medical school student; and Nadine, who will be accompanying her mother on the campaign trail until she begins college in the fall. Son Jesse is a sophomore in high school.

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