

Candidate John Ragan Is Being Dishonest With You

A few weeks ago John Ragan, a candidate in the Republican primary, accused me of taking no position on the issue of illegal immigration because I was absent for a vote. Furthermore, he continues to dishonestly say that I intentionally missed the vote. Nothing could be further from the truth.

First, I want to inform the candidate and those of you who may have read his letter, that I have a very clear position on illegal immigration: if you are here illegally, then you are breaking the law. Anyone who breaks the law in Tennessee must suffer the consequences.

My votes on illegal immigration are clear. In 2008, I joined with my former colleague Rep. John Hood in voting for HB0729, a bill that “created the criminal offenses of recklessly employing an illegal alien” and “knowingly employing an illegal alien.” I also voted for SB1310, by Senator Tracy, in 2009, a bill that imposes penalties on “employers and employees” hiring those not authorized to work in the U.S. under federal immigration laws. Also, in 2007, I supported and voted for HB1216, by Rep Fincher, entitled the “Tennessee Immigration Compliance Act.” It passed with a 93 to 0 bipartisan vote in the House of Representatives. Unfortunately, it was killed by the Republican controlled Senate. Most House members believed this bill to be an example for other states to follow.

My votes have been and continue to be quite clear. You come here illegally, or your company hires illegal immigrants, you are breaking the law. Again, anyone who breaks the law in Tennessee must suffer the consequences.

I encourage this candidate, and any citizens in the 33rd district, to go to www.capitol.tn.gov and look at my record when it comes to the issues. The votes speak for themselves, and I believe I have shown a consistent pattern of putting the people of Anderson County first and doing what is best for all Tennesseans.

As far as not being present to vote for the bill, unfortunately there are times when members are called away from the floor of the House. In this case, I was pulled away for a meeting regarding red light cameras, an issue of great importance to the people of Anderson County.

I appreciate having this opportunity to voice my opinion on the issue of illegal immigration and look forward to talking more about my stance on the issues throughout the coming months.