



J.D. Hayworth: Leading the GOP into a Political Wilderness on Immigration

Talk show host and former Congressman J.D. Hayworth has begun a campaign against longtime Arizona Senator John McCain in the state's Republican primary. While Hayworth has attracted a great deal of national attention due to the anti-incumbency mood in the country today, his [views on immigration reform](#), among other issues, proved to be too extreme to win in the past, attracting support from far-right voters and political extremists and turning away Latino and swing voters.

The Arizona race is emblematic of a tug-of-war happening in the Republican party today as far-right candidates edge out practical reformers who can potentially deliver the real solutions that swing voters want and stop the bleeding of Latino voters from a party whose brand name has been tarnished by years of anti-immigrant campaigning.

Throughout his 12 years in Congress, Hayworth distinguished himself as one of the most hard-line opponents to practical immigration reform, as a fervent supporter of expensive enforcement-only propositions that would fail to fix the underlying problems with our broken immigration system. Most notably, Hayworth voted against the notorious "Sensenbrenner" immigration reform bill in 2005 – a bill that that would have made undocumented immigrants and anyone who helps them into felons – because the bill [did not do enough](#) to "turn back the massive invasion of our country by illegal aliens."

Hayworth's positions earned him praise from hard-line anti-immigrant extremist groups, including the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), [designated a hate group](#) by the Southern Poverty Law Center. But in what has become something of a pattern over several election cycles, support by anti-immigrant extremists seems to [inspire an opposite reaction](#) from voters hungry for real, mainstream immigration reform. Democrat Harry Mitchell, a supporter of comprehensive immigration reform, ended Hayworth's Congressional career in the 2006 election.

Hayworth Tacks Right on Immigration and Loses his Seat in Congress

J.D. Hayworth has become nationally known as an expert practitioner in the strategy to [drive Latinos away from the Republican Party](#) and failing to inspire the confidence of swing voters. His switch on immigration from more open-minded to stereotypically closed-minded clearly hurt him with Latino voters in the 2006 race.

The late Republican strategist Richard Nadler wrote in the [Wall Street Journal](#) that Hayworth owed his defeat, in part, to his “deportationist viewpoint.” And according to a [study promoted by Republican strategist Linda Chavez](#):

In Arizona's 5th district, six-term GOP incumbent Rep. J.D. Hayworth actually switched positions on immigration from being a sponsor of guest worker legislation to becoming one of the most outspoken opponents of immigration, even advocating a moratorium on legal immigration from Mexico. In 2004, Hayworth received almost as many Hispanic votes as his Democrat opponent, with each receiving about 48 percent; but in 2006, Hayworth lost 59-36 percent in Hispanic precincts.

The [Arizona Republic](#) notably dropped its previous endorsement of Hayworth in favor of his 2006 opponent, Harry Mitchell, in part because of Hayworth’s extreme views.

“During this past term, Hayworth has devolved from a windy and sometimes cartoonish politician into an angry demagogue who has shamelessly and divisively exploited the immigration issue, arguably the No. 1 concern of Arizonans. Hayworth and Joe Eule, his chief of staff, rushed out a quickie border-security book, *Whatever It Takes*, and the congressman transformed himself into Mr. Tough Guy on illegal immigration, reliably appearing on the cable-TV news shows as a spokesman for the fire-breathing hardliners.”

Hayworth’s Controversial Views on Immigrants, Race and Culture

Hayworth calls previous generations of American immigrants “illegal invaders”:

- Hayworth wrote, “Who can blame millions of unskilled and poverty-stricken Mexicans and others who come here? They rightly see the present-day guest-worker proposals as an invitation to cross our border illegally, hunker down in the underground economy **and wait until the United States gives them the same legitimate status as generations of previous illegal invaders who traveled the same path.**” [[Op-ed, Washington Times, 12/14/05](#)]

Equates hard-line immigration stance to “standing up for our culture”:

- Hayworth wrote, “Immigration reform is being stymied by an unholy alliance of big business, big labor, Dems and GOPers cynically looking to woo Latino voters, and left-

wing extremists out to **alter the essential character of America.**" [Op-ed, Human Events Online, 11/25/03]

- In "Whatever It Takes," Hayworth's book on his vision for immigration policy, Hayworth wrote, **"We act like a bunch of defeatist wimps unwilling to stand up for our culture, our borders, our security, or our own laws."** [Washington Times, [2/13/06](#)]
- From his January, 2006 op-ed in the [Arizona Republic](#): "How different are these radical Islamists from the Mexican politicians who push for a Mexico without borders and undermine our efforts at assimilation? **...In France, they have a minister of social cohesion. How long before we need one here?"**

Advocates ban on *legal* immigration from Mexico:

- Hayworth proposed a **three-year ban on legal immigration** from Mexico. [Atlantic Monthly, [5/1/06](#)]

Defends "people 'hunting' migrants along the border":

- According to the [Arizona Republic](#), Hayworth accused President Bush of having "maligned" the Minuteman Project. The article states "White House spokesman Taylor Gross said Wednesday that no apology will be coming from the White House. Gross explained that on March 23, when asked by a reporter about his view of people "hunting" migrants along the border, Bush simply said he was opposed to "vigilantes in the United States of America.""

In his anti-immigrant manifesto, "Whatever It Takes," Hayworth praised the cultural views of notorious anti-Semite, Henry Ford. [The Forward](#) reported on the controversy:

In the 1920s, Ford's Dearborn Publishing Company released "The International Jew," a conspiratorial, four-volume work that portrays Jews as scheming to assert world domination. In it, Ford lays out the theory that Judaism and "Americanism" is inherently at odds with one another. Ford was also known to have accepted the Grand Service Cross of the Supreme Order of the German Eagle, an award bestowed on him by Hitler.

Hayworth's book, a 194-page manifesto on the failures of American immigration policy, assails multiculturalism and voices support for the Minutemen, a vigilante group that has charged itself with monitoring American borders. In his chapter on the merits of assimilating immigrants into American society, Hayworth quotes from a 1914 New York Times article in which Ford said: "These men of many nations must be taught American ways, the English language, and the right way to live." In his book, Hayworth wrote, "Talk like that today and our liberal elites will brand you a cultural imperialist, or worse. But if you ask me, Ford had a better idea."

Hayworth Supported by Extremists

Chris Simcox, leader of the virulently anti-immigrant Minuteman Civil Defense Corps, who claims that he has personally seen [Chinese troops](#) at the U.S./Mexico border, recently dropped his own bid for the Republican Senate primary in Arizona and endorsed J.D. Hayworth. In his announcement, [Simcox said](#): “I pledge to him, and to all of you, that I will do my all and give my all to this cause. And I urge my supporters to follow me and join J.D.’s team.”

Hayworth has also [received the endorsement](#) of other figures in the anti-immigrant leadership in Arizona including the notorious Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County and state senator Russell Pearce.

The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), labeled a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, and other extreme anti-immigrant organizations have praised Hayworth. FAIR published a glowing review of Hayworth’s book on their [website](#):

There are a handful of brave souls in Congress waging the good fight and doing whatever it takes to bring some semblance of order to our nation’s immigration policies. Congressman J.D. Hayworth (R-Ariz.) must certainly be included among this elite group of legislators, as he has used not only his position in Congress, but the communications talents he honed as a radio talk show host to raise national awareness of the crisis this country is facing.

And in a December 2005 [press release](#), FAIR’s executive director Dan Stein lauded Hayworth’s need to “*out-extreme*” even his fellow anti-immigrant colleagues in Congress by voting against the Sensenbrenner bill:

The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) congratulates Rep. J.D. Hayworth (R-AZ) on his speech on the House floor...about the true nature of the Sensenbrenner/King border security bill (note: FAIR believes this bill much weaker than TRUE Enforcement-which Hayworth supports--and could set the table for an indentured worker program coming from the Senate in the Spring). Hayworth repeatedly asked his colleagues to stop calling this ‘comprehensive reform’ because it provides shallow enforcement, maybe, in years to come, while an indentured worker program is rammed down our throats by the Bush administration and House and Senate allies.

Hayworth also received a \$1,000 campaign contribution from the U.S. Immigration Reform (USIR) PAC, which was originally the Political Action Committee of FAIR. Mary Lou Tanton, wife of FAIR founder John Tanton, is the President of this PAC, to which [she and her husband](#) have been major financial contributors.

Mark Krikorian, executive director of the [Center for Immigration Studies](#) (CIS), another group with close ties to John Tanton, white nationalist and godfather of the anti-immigrant movement, brought attention to Hayworth’s role as a congressional leader in a January 2004 [article](#) in the *National Review*. Krikorian: “Rep. J. D. Hayworth, an Arizona Republican, got 63

colleagues to sign a letter to President Bush urging him to reject ‘any and all forms of amnesty.’”

And an article advocating support of Hayworth’s reelection bid was even published on DavidDuke.com, the website of Klansman David Duke.

Demographic Reality Check: Could Hayworth Hand Arizona to the Democrats?

Hayworth lost a Congressional district where [8.1% of voters](#) are Latinos, but for his Senate race, Hayworth will face a Latino voting population nearly double that size. A recent America’s Voice report entitled, [The Power of the Latino Vote in the 2010 Elections](#), found that nearly 15% of the 2008 electorate in Arizona was Latino and their numbers are growing. In the general election, Hayworth is going to have a hard time convincing these voters he’s on their side if he spends the primary season demonizing their family members and campaigning with some of the most notoriously anti-immigrant personalities in the country.

In spite of his long history in support of comprehensive immigration reform, [Senator John McCain lost](#) the Latino vote in Arizona to Barack Obama after drifting rightward on the issue during the Republican primary, with 56% supporting President Obama and 41% supporting Senator McCain. In the current primary race, McCain continues to call for [securing the border “first,”](#) and leaves open the question as to what may come next and when. His attempt to strike a “middle ground” is puzzling, since the most restrictionist Republicans seem to have already written McCain off as “pro-amnesty,” and in the general election voters will be looking for a senator who promises real solutions, not just tough rhetoric.

In both [2006](#) and [2008](#), candidates running on hard-line immigration platforms were roundly rejected in favor of comprehensive reformers in dozens of races, both in Arizona and across the country.

The Republican primary civil war over immigration has become increasingly popular in states across the country, but has had a damaging effect on the GOP’s image nationwide and its candidates’ ability to compete for Latino and other swing voters in general elections. The Hayworth-McCain match-up is no different, and it will be interesting to watch where the issue takes them in 2010. One thing is for sure—a Hayworth win in the Republican primary will send a clear message to Latino voters, and an unwelcoming message at that.