I recently ran across the following OpEd by Senator Harry Reid, the current Senate Majority Leader, in the *Los Angeles Times*. It is of particular interest in light of the current Senate consideration of S744, a proposal to rewrite the immigration laws to legalize illegal immigrants and increase the flow of immigration.

That says everything about immigration that needs to be said. I would be proud to have written it myself. He even proposes an annual gross immigration limit, 325,000, which is close to the net immigration of 200,000 that I proposed as part of a way to reverse U.S. population growth (NPG FORUM “The Two Child Family”, May 1994).

The only problem: that OpEd was dated August 10, 1994.

What is he saying now? “... we are all the better for having hardworking new immigrants as contributing members of our communities – shopping as customers in our stores, paying payroll taxes,
and giving to local churches and charities.” (from his website) or: “For me, this issue is personal. The stories I often hear in Nevada’s communities are heartbreaking. Our broken system tears families apart every day; it leaves our country vulnerable and it is not good for our economy. I will continue working closely with the community to get this bill over the finish line.” (4-10-2013 press release)

What has changed Harry’s mind? Certainly, not the numbers. Since 1994, U.S. population — driven by immigration — has risen 55 million, or 21%. The problems he described have all gotten worse. Unemployment has soared, and the proportion of the population with jobs has gone ‘way down. Environmental degradation and the pressures on resources have gotten worse. Climate warming has turned from an hypothesis to a reality.

Why did Harry change his mind? Politics. He is intimidated by the very force that led to that long-ago OpEd. He wants to please the growing Hispanic minority, which has risen from 10% to 17% of the U.S. population — 54 million — since 1994. I think perhaps he misreads their feelings. Polls can prove what the pollster wants to prove, but there is a long history of polls showing that a majority of U.S. Hispanics, like other groups, opposes high immigration. Correctly so, in terms of their own interests. He is listening to self-appointed immigration advocates.

If Harry is interested in the future of the country, and not just in his own job, he will read his own old OpEd, and act on it.

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