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Buzzfeed immigration forum discusses the issues

By: Sean Quinn – May 23, 2013

Last Tuesday, I got to hear Mario Lopez speak.

It was my first night in Washington, D.C., and I got onto the guest list of an immigration forum with an open bar sponsored by BuzzFeed. Things were going swimmingly, and I couldn't wait to hear what A.C. Slater himself had to say.

Then I realized that it was in fact another Mario Lopez. Mario H. Lopez, to be exact, and he serves as president of the Hispanic Leadership Fund.

He was joined onstage by leaders from La Raza and the Cato Institute, and Mickey Kaus from the conservative *Daily Caller* newspaper, and although I wasn't going to hear what it was like behind-the-scenes of *EXTRA*, I quickly learned that I had stumbled onto a discussion about the most important issue in America today.

That's right - not what's happening at the Department of Justice, the Internal Revenue Service, Benghazi, the debt ceiling, terrorism or anything of the sort. Immigration is the number one issue facing America today.

Not only is it an issue that affects our foreign policy, but our economic policy as well. The crowd at the event was full of libertarians, and that's not a term I'd use to describe my political philosophy, but we all agreed reform was needed, and it was needed soon.

The summit spoke on the bill being debated by the "Gang of Eight" - a group of Republican and Democratic Senators who are fighting for comprehensive immigration reform in the Senate and House - and nearly all of them were in favor, sans Kaus.

Kaus represented the far-right fringe of the Republican Party that is refusing to look in the mirror. If the Republicans aren't well-represented in crafting reform and developing a path to citizenship for those who are here illegally, they can kiss goodbye any level of support goodbye. Kaus believed that they've only been gathering around 40% of Hispanic support anyway, and was willing to take the hit.

Alexander Nowrasteh, who represented the Cato Institute, said the conservative solution on immigration would be allowing the market to regulate immigration, not government bureaucrats. Nowrasteh was in favor of the reform, because he believed it would better the economic situation for all Americans.

It's safe to say the fireworks have begun in Washington, D.C., for the summer, but the real grand finale will come when the immigration bill is debated on by the House and Senate.

Congress has the rare opportunity to come together and do something right to fix a perpetually broken system, or they could continue to believe that building a higher fence will actually curb illegal immigration.