



## **Goodlatte’s immigration bill would imperil American values**

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President Trump and Republicans in Congress are missing an opportunity.

Rather than seize the moment and embrace a solution for Dreamers that also would boost our safety and security, they are advancing proposals that turn away from our values, threatening our safety and economy in the process.

House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte’s (R-Va.) bill, the “Securing America’s Future Act,” lurks as perhaps the most likely vehicle. For starters, it would reduce annual legal immigration by about 40 percent. And it wouldn’t even offer certainty for Dreamers, instead aiming low: a temporary, renewable three-year status with no guaranteed provision for eventual citizenship.

Among the bill’s opponents are farmers, who do not want a cap on agricultural work visas or a requirement that existing workers here illegally return to their countries of origin — provisions that would hurt not only farmers but also businesses between farm and table.

That’s just for starters. The Coalition for the American Dream, which comprises business leaders representing every major sector of the U.S. economy, opposes the bill. And David Bier at the CATO Institute wrote, “The good leaves much to be desired, and the bad is about as bad as it gets.”

The Niskanen Center puts the cost of legal immigration cuts alone at \$147 billion on the nation’s GDP in 2028 — and says the bill’s overall net cost would be \$319 billion.

Bad economics aren’t the Goodlatte bill’s only problem.

It also would restrict law enforcement policies that help ensure our safety and security. It would do so both directly, by targeting police departments whose community-trust policies restrict

officers from asking about immigration status, and indirectly, by criminalizing unlawful presence with harsh penalties.

The result isn't pretty for those of us who want our neighbors to cooperate with state and local law enforcement, no matter their immigration status, when they're victims of or witnesses to a crime.

Goodlatte's bill also would go against our values by degrading the value of unified families. No matter what some pundits say, immigrants cannot bring just anyone here, and those they can sponsor often have agonizing waits. Goodlatte's bill would eliminate the ability of citizens to sponsor their parents, adult children, brothers and sisters.

Think about that: U.S. citizens would no longer be able to reunite with members of their immediate families.

Finally, the bill would diminish humanitarian protections for asylum seekers and children.

The proposal comes within the context of an administration that is ramping up enforcement — detaining immigrants with no criminal record when they come to regular check-ins, for example. Goodlatte's bill falls dangerously close to a temporary solution for Dreamers, criminalization and enforcement for everyone else.

We risk straying so far from President Reagan's "shining city on a hill" that it would be fair to ask if we're losing our way.

America can be better than this. Republicans and Democrats can agree on policies that help us grow and strengthen — economically and morally — rather than stagnate and isolate. We can strengthen our borders, boost our safety and security, and offer the permanence of eventual citizenship for Dreamers, who are law-abiding and contributing.

Chairman Goodlatte's bill is not the way.