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Distinguished persons of the week

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President Trump and Attorney General Jeff Sessions this week chose to use the beneficiaries of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program as fodder in their battle for the hearts of angry white nationalists. Their phony legal deadline — no lawsuit had been filed — concocted by Republican governors (with or without collaboration with Sessions) to provoke action forced the country to look carefully at exactly who the “dreamers” are.

Sessions flailed in his announcement attempting to tie the young immigrants to an upswing in crime (of which there is no proof). DACA of course bars those with any serious criminal record from participation. David Bier of the Cato Institute tells us: “Only 2,139 out of almost 800,000 DACA recipients have lost their permits because of criminal or public safety concerns — that’s just a quarter of 1 percent. Four times as many U.S.-born Americans are in prison. About 35 times as many Americans have ended up behind bars at some point before age 34.”)

In the real world, the country learned there is “no compelling proof” that dreamers take jobs from native-born Americans (we’re at virtually full employment as things are). Americans who bothered with the facts found out: “Of the DACA-eligible immigrants over 21 years old, 12 percent have bachelor’s degrees, 3 percent have advanced degrees, 84 percent have completed high school and some college, and 2 percent did not graduate from high school, according to an analysis by New American Economy.”

Unsurprisingly, the White House was soon rattled by a fierce backlash from voters. Sympathetic (and accurate) reporting on the dreamers left Trump looking, properly so, like the villain.

Within 12 hours Trump was wavering on his six-month deadline, tweeting that he would revisit the deadline if Congress did not act. By week’s end, he was beaming with optimism that Congress would find a DACA fix. Voters had the chance to compare the president’s cowardly action (first hiding behind Sessions and then dumping the issue in Congress’s lap) with the dreamers’ quiet determination to pursue opportunities in the only country most of them have ever known.

Later in the week, the vice chairman of Trump’s voter fraud commission (tasked with finding nonexistent fraud on a widespread scale), Kris Kobach, showed his true colors in a TV interview. The Post reported:

The interview drew widespread notice after Kobach, asked what he would tell immigrants who face deportation despite living almost all of their lives in the United States at a young age, responded: “I would suggest go home and get in line, come into the United States legally, then get a green card, then become a citizen.”

No statement could have better revealed the anti-immigrant crowd's ignorance (*America* is their home) and cruelty.

When Trump dispatched Sessions to do his dirty work, the president surely did not intend to make the dreamers into plucky underdogs. However, his decision and the rhetoric of his underlings made the administration look small, petty and thick-headed — and the young immigrants look rather heroic. By week's end, the president and members of Congress were falling over themselves attempting to assure the dreamers no harm would come to them. (At House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi's request, Trump tweeted, "For all of those (DACA) that are concerned about your status during the 6 month period, you have nothing to worry about – No action!" Tweeted like a man on the defensive.)

Just by holding their ground and telling their stories to the press, dreamers outmaneuvered and outclassed Trump and his ilk. For that we can say, well done, ladies and gentlemen. We're glad you choose to make your home here.