

Ending DACA a decision without any good results or purpose

Terry Smith

September 7, 2017

Why did President Trump order an end to DACA? What good will come of terminating a five-year-old executive policy that protected innocent young undocumented immigrants from being deported?

None.

Deep-sixing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program won't create jobs. In fact, it will exacerbate an existing labor shortage.

It will cost the American economy upwards to \$200 billion, according to a study by the economically conservative CATO Institute. Even the hidebound U.S. Chamber of Commerce in a press release Tuesday asserted that ending the program is a terrible idea: "To reverse course now and deport these individuals is contrary to fundamental American principles and the best interests of our country."

Winding down the program will seriously disrupt the lives of some 800,000 undocumented immigrants whose parents brought them to the United States as children. In order to stay here for two-year renewable terms, they've had to follow the law and become contributing members of society.

They are not criminals.

They are not leaches on society.

As has been repeated in plenty of other venues since Trump's order ending DACA on Tuesday, these young adults are American in every way other than a signed piece of paper.

In an editorial published on Wednesday, the *Los Angeles Times* provided examples of the sort of young adults now placed in legal limbo by Trump's decision to end DACA:

"Who are the people currently holding deferments? They are young men and women like Antonio Cisnero, born in Acapulco and now living in Pomona, who is studying at Cal State L.A. (while working full time to pay for his education) for a career in biomedical engineering. Maria Lizeth Ruiz was born in Mexico City and now lives in Costa Mesa; she wants to become a court interpreter. Eunsoo Jeong, who came from South Korea to California as a 13-year-old, used DACA status to graduate from college and get a job in a Burbank animation lab. Jesus Contreras

arrived in the U.S. from Mexico when he was 6, and he spent the last week doing his job in Houston — as a paramedic helping save people from flooding associated with Hurricane Harvey.

“What public good is achieved by yanking such people from their homes, families and communities and sending them to countries where they are strangers and often don’t even speak the language?”

Sending them back to countries that they’ve never known, with languages they may not even speak, will not make America great again. Rather, it will continue the steady diminution of this nation that began the day Trump entered the White House.

These are facts that Trump’s Attorney General Jeff Sessions, immigration hardliners in Congress, attorneys general in nine deeply Red states, and Trump’s ignorant nativist base either don’t believe or don’t want to believe. Trump is with them on this, depending on the hour of the day. Sometimes, however, he can wax elephant (pun intended) about the “incredible kids” protected by DACA.

He’s all over the place on this issue, though he came to rest Tuesday in just the right spot to shove the very popular DACA program over to a deeply dysfunctional U.S. Congress. He delayed the “wind-down” of DACA for six months, during which time he urged Congress to pass a replacement as part of broad immigration reform.

Anti-immigration members of Congress, most of them members of the GOP’s hard-right (and misnamed) Freedom Caucus, restated their long-held position Tuesday that they won’t support immigration reform without money for Trump’s border wall. Trump, if he’s consistent with past pronouncements, will take the same stand, effectively holding these 800,000 immigrants hostage to his quixotic wall, another of his terrible (and prohibitively costly) ideas.

That position probably is a deal-breaker in a Congress that this fall will be asked to provide a massive amount of money for hurricane relief in at least two states drowned by Harvey – and after mega-cane Irma blasts the Southeast this weekend – probably several more.

So comprehensive immigration reform is a long shot, and if one can take the president at his word (stop laughing), DACA is done for.

AG Sessions and Trump did try to dress up a wrongheaded, inhumane, deeply unpopular decision in a constitutional party dress. They trotted out their paper-thin argument that President Obama’s executive decision to defer immigration enforcement against the children of illegal immigrants violated the Constitution.

Yet, only the most biased, opportunistic reading of America’s founding document backs up that position.

The *New York Times*’ editorial board addressed that issue on Tuesday, “As for the policy’s legality, there’s no question that the president has the authority to set immigration-enforcement priorities. Presidents of both parties have done that for decades, and President Obama did it by focusing on people with criminal records and not on those brought to this country as children.”

On his [Facebook page](#), Obama showed why reason, truth and compassion are better reflections of presidential leadership than bigotry, lies and self-interest:

“Let’s be clear: the action taken today isn’t required legally. It’s a political decision, and a moral question. Whatever concerns or complaints Americans may have about immigration in general, we shouldn’t threaten the future of this group of young people who are here through no fault of their own, who pose no threat, who are not taking away anything from the rest of us.”

Trump appeared to have second thoughts about his decision to terminate DACA later on Tuesday, though if his past acts can predict future ones, his base instincts on immigration will get a powerful recharge the next time he speaks in front of an army of his adoring supporters.

Bottom line, this latest move is yet another instance of a destructive Trump policy that will hurt a lot of people and carry none but political benefits, and even that’s highly debatable. This is a long-established pattern, and nobody with rudimentary observational skills should expect anything different from this president.