

ARKANSAS TIMES

Open letter to AG Leslie Rutledge

Connor Thompson

July 6, 2017

This letter is in response to your decision to join Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and nine other state legal officials in calling for President Trump to cancel the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

Undocumented children have not committed any crime. The fact that I have to say this in 2017 when this battle was fought over five years ago is astonishing to me. These are people who are following the rules and actively trying to work in America and become citizens. You have consistently used your office to oppress and fight against the rights of Arkansas residents. The attorney general's office is meant to protect and serve the interests of ALL residents of the state. Your actions constitute a dereliction of duty.

Your previous efforts to prevent DACA recipients from obtaining Arkansas driver's licenses show how malicious and mean-spirited your use of the attorney general's office has been. Undocumented people contribute to Arkansas's economy. They work in agriculture, at Tyson, at Walmart. They came to this country to seek a better life for themselves and their children. As the Cato Institute has pointed out, immigrants commit crimes at a lower rate than the general population of native-born citizens, and designating more people as "criminals" who have not committed any other offense increases government spending in detention infrastructure. You are actively opposing the cause of justice and hurting the local economy of your state by making these actions a priority.

I grew up in Arkansas and was educated in the Little Rock School District. We were taught the civil rights history of our state. We learned about the Little Rock Nine and Daisy Bates. This is the civil rights issue of our time. You are choosing to side with the legacy of Orval Faubus, with the white families who spit on integrating students. History will be a harsh judge of your actions today.