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## **Star Opinion: The many ways Trump's RAISE Act fails**

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If you were on social media last week, you may have seen a quiz produced by Time magazine called “Find Out If President Trump Would Let You Immigrate to America.” Most of its target audience, people willing to click stuff on the internet, quickly found out that no, if they were judged by the criteria of the latest Trump-supported legislation, they would not be allowed to come to the U.S.

Nobel Prize winners and Olympic athletes have a leg up on the “merit-based” scale that would let immigrants be considered for a visa under the Reforming American Immigration for Strong Employment Act, or RAISE Act. But even America’s sweetheart (and Tucson native) Kerri Strug misses the cut. Sorry, but she medaled over eight years ago.

This would all be funny if it wasn’t supposed to be a real proposal put forward by thoughtful people wanting to fix a genuine problem. Instead, it joins the travel ban, the Victims of Immigration Crime Engagement Office, and the big, beautiful, fully-paid-by-Mexico border wall as the latest example of political rhetoric masquerading as serious policy.

It’s time Arizona’s federal representatives propose and support legislation that counters the flailing actions by the Trump administration, which not only make a broken system worse, they run counter to who we are as a nation.

The RAISE Act, introduced by Republican Sens. David Perdue and Tom Cotton, wants to cut legal immigration by about 50 percent. It does this through the elimination of the diversity visa (which awards 50,000 visas a year through a lottery system), placing limits on family members who can apply for legal permanent residency, and limiting refugee resettlement.

One of the bill’s purported goals, and big selling point by the president, is that it will increase the number of high-skilled immigrants by favoring people who have high educational attainment, speak fluent English and have a high-paying job waiting for them.

The truth is that it will create a points system for work visas but it will not increase the existing cap, according to the libertarian Cato Institute, negating the claims that it will bring more high-skilled immigrants into the country. No wonder Silicon Valley, which would be the natural

beneficiary of allowing in a higher number of skilled foreign workers, has laughed off the proposal.

This kind of bait-and-switch is nothing new for the Trump administration, but at least it had the decency this time to try and pretend it wasn't all red meat for the anti-immigrant groups among its supporters.

On the positive end of legislation tackling immigration, Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham and Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin introduced the 2017 Dream Act last month. The bill, which has been around in one version or another since 2001, would grant legal status to immigrants who entered the country illegally as children.

Right now, approximately 800,000 “dreamers,” as these immigrants are called, are protected from deportation by President Obama’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. But with that measure under attack, it is essential that Congress step up and give these young people — who are American in all but birth — the chance to live their lives without fear in the only home many of them have ever known.

But while helping dreamers is almost easy compared with true comprehensive immigration reform, that is still the ultimate goal.

If there is one unintended consequence of the free rein that President Trump has given anti-immigrant elements, it is that with their every action they throw into sharp relief the cruelty of their positions. They make it harder for people to ignore that it’s not all about national security or proper integration or about respecting the rule of law.

It wasn't that long ago that Sens. John McCain and Jeff Flake were part of the Gang of Eight, the bipartisan group that wrote the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013. While not perfect, it was the kind of sensible, practical legislation that’s missing today.

McCain bucked the administration with his vote to prevent the repeal of the Affordable Care Act. Sen. Flake has staked his re-election on the strength of conservative values versus the philosophy of Trump.

Will they continue their efforts to fight for principle? Can they offer us a serious solution on immigration that meets the demands of our country?