



Opinion: Understand the cost of Trump's immigration policy, and vote with your wallet

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The President of the United States exercises significant fiscal power in signing an executive order, and last year, President Trump signed more than any president in a quarter century.

What are the financial costs of the president's immigration policies that are being implemented without review and approval from Congress? How shall we grade the president on his spending choices? Do his financial expenditures meet your expectations and budget priorities?

You should care about this. It is your money being spent.

Trump says we need to spend more to stop the MS-13 criminal gang from entering the United States, but he is shelling out billions of your hard-earned tax dollars targeting foreign national students, engineers, postdoctoral researchers, scientists, and entrepreneurs.

He is using your money to deport parents with U.S. citizen children and spouses, even if they have no criminal record; we are paying for it and failing to receive the return that was promised. The costs are staggering in taxpayer contributions, lost human capital and lost opportunity.

If you do nothing else, consider this when you vote:

In alignment with Trump's policy of stepping up immigrant detentions, a record-smashing 13,000 children are now in federal custody (a fivefold increase over last year). Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) reports it has cost upwards of \$775 per bed each day to keep these children locked up.

Some may applaud the president's effort to not let a single child be released until the fullest possible extent of misery has been doled out, but I say this is nuts.

Does HHS spending \$458 million of your money in a year to pay a contractor to incarcerate children between the ages of six months and 17 years make any sense? Why is this a good thing for America? What is the benefit to our national security?

It gets worse.

Our president has decided to end Temporary Protected Status for hundreds of thousands of Latinos and Haitians legally residing in the United States. He is using DACA recipients as pawns, threatening to deport millions of Dreamers if he does not get his wall.

The Immigrant Legal Resource Center at Harvard Law School found that deporting all Salvadoran, Honduran and Haitian TPS holders would cost taxpayers \$3.1 billion, resulting in a \$6.9 billion reduction to Social Security and Medicare contributions and lead to a \$45.2 billion reduction in GDP over a decade.

The conservative CATO Institute estimates that ending DACA would cost our economy another \$200 billion.

Disturbing? Consider this: in June, Trump stated that undocumented immigrants should be immediately returned “from where they came” with “no judges or court cases.” What? The Fifth Amendment states that “no person ... shall be ... deprived of life, liberty or property, without due process of law.”

The Fourteenth Amendment grants to any person within the jurisdiction of the United States “the equal protection of the laws.”

Over the past six months, the president and his senior advisor Stephen Miller, who reportedly enjoyed watching children ripped from parents’ arms at the border, have intentionally violated the Constitution by deporting asylum seekers without a hearing; by separating families without due process; and by committing intentional infliction of emotional distress without providing equal protection of the laws.

Their strategy is backfiring, costing taxpayers millions as lawsuits are being filed to force President Trump to respect the Constitution, which he took an oath to do.

All of this doesn’t happen in a vacuum. The Trump administration just diverted \$260 million from cancer research, HIV/AIDS prevention, and the Medicare and Medicaid programs to cover the costs of the president’s immigration agenda.

This must be part of Trump’s “fantastic,” “incredible,” “huge,” financial wisdom and decision-making, which he says are taking our country to new heights.

In reality, this is the kind of lip service a billionaire president pays to the everyday people who fund an immigration agenda grounded in mean-spiritedness, deception, and fiscal insanity — all to recruit and pacify the worst elements of our society.

So, if nothing else, think of your wallet when you vote.