

WASHINGTON **Examiner**

Don't let populism push people out of the country

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America is at a crossroads: Do we want to grow and prosper or shut out the rest of the world and stagnate? Listening to talking heads such as Tucker Carlson or Michelle Malkin, the answer seems already made up: stagnate. While the data behind economic growth is straightforward — the more highly skilled the populace, the better the economy — the populist agenda that has swept the Right into a frenzy has thrown rational thinking to the dumpster bin and adopted a nationalist stance that threatens traditional economic growth by rejecting skill over protectionism.

For instance, late last year, Charlie Kirk, the head of Turning Point USA, said that we should be stapling green cards to diplomas. However, when he later appeared on Carlson's show and was attacked for wanting to include more college graduates in the workforce, he reversed course and apologized for his once-rational policy stance.

This was a major blow to those of us who understand the numbers but don't have the same soapbox that Kirk has to push back on the populist agenda.

The damage and fear the coronavirus has done to supply chains in China notwithstanding, the evangelism of doomed isolationist economic policy has started spreading. While the downsides of ignorance don't have the same immediate mortality issues that a viral epidemic might have, the ideas espoused that these thought leaders seem to have the same infection rate (which is at least in part why they are taking these policy positions).

Now immigration issues are again in need of government action. On September 5, 2017, the Trump administration announced that the government was terminating the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, and the Supreme Court is currently reviewing the administration's attempt to end DACA. Oral arguments were heard in November 2019, and a decision is expected before July 2020 but could come soon. With this decision, the Supreme Court will decide the fate of nearly 700,000 people who were brought in illegally, albeit by no fault of their own, and it should reject the Trump administration's efforts to terminate this program.

If the Supreme Court allows the program to be terminated, it will have severe consequences for DACA recipients, their families, our communities, and the economy.

However, no matter what the Supreme Court decides or what the presidential election means for the programs, Congress should act now. In a best-case scenario for DACA recipients, in which a new president would restore the DACA program on Day One of his presidency, still 252,000 DACA recipients would fall out of status between now and January. This is an urgent issue that deserves priority.

An American Action Forum study found that physically removing all "Dreamers" would cost between \$7 billion and \$21 billion and reduce U.S. GDP by 0.4%. A Cato Institute study found that our economy could lose \$351 billion in national GDP, and the federal government could lose \$92.9 billion in tax revenue over 10 years.

The long-run economics outlook of a nation shut off from the rest of the world is bleak. Hopefully, the Supreme Court doesn't listen to the empty rhetoric of talking heads, and Congress takes the reins of this important economic issue and acts sooner rather than later.