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Congress must move fast to protect Dreamers

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When commenting on President Trump's proposal to provide amnesty for 1.8 million undocumented immigrants Tuesday, Chief of Staff John Kelly suggested the large number was to include people eligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals who were "too lazy to get off their ass" to register for the program. While it's commendable the administration is considering legalization for such a large number of people, Kelly's insinuation that not registering for DACA is a matter of laziness is insulting and way off the mark — this group adds immensely to the country's economy and social fabric.

Kelly's remarks aside, Congress should work with the administration to find a solution for the Dreamers. America would do nothing but benefit from it.

Ohio Gov. John Kasich has been an advocate for the Dreamers since it was announced the program would be ended, saying that DACA beneficiaries are welcome in the Buckeye State: "We want all the immigrants to come to Ohio because we know how much they contribute to America." Ohio's Sens. Rob Portman and Sherrod Brown should follow Kasich's lead and work quickly with their colleagues to ensure that Dreamers are not expelled from the U.S.

Immigration is a sharply divisive topic — critics say that immigrants take jobs away from native-born Americans, abuse social programs and are more likely to be criminals. None of this is true.

Immigration does not have a negative impact on the employment or wage levels of natives. Multiple studies show little to no impact on the employment of the locals in the cities immigrants settle in. Others have found that there is even a long-term boost in wages for natives, as they are incentivized to invest in education and skill-building. Ultimately, immigration is essential to increased economic growth.

Immigrants are not fiscal burdens on social programs. Over the course of their lifetimes, their net fiscal effect is positive, meaning they pay more in than they take out of social programs. Dreamers are no exception to this; providing a pathway to legal residence would boost revenues by almost \$95 million, according to the Cato Institute. Fears of negative economic impacts are often accompanied by fears of increased crime. But multiple studies have shown that immigrants commit less crime than native-born citizens.

All of these facts should make finding a solution for Dreamers a no-brainer, particularly for Ohio, where 4,400 people have benefited from DACA. Surveys show that more than 90 percent of Dreamers are employed, are more likely to start businesses than native-born Americans and contribute upward of \$2 billion annually in state and local taxes. According to the Center for

American Progress, Ohio stands to lose more than \$250 million in annual gross domestic product if Dreamers are expelled.

Most arguments against DACA — and immigration more broadly — treat immigrants purely as costs. This thinking is zero-sum: Humans are also resources. They have skills and imaginations. The immigrant who works in a low-paying job upon arrival could become an entrepreneur and eventually employ 500 people. The average age of DACA recipients is 22, and the majority of them are currently in school. Deporting them would rob Ohio of 4,400 potential job creators.

More brain power and creativity in an economy is an engine of growth. Immigrants already make up a quarter of America's entrepreneurs. Two out of five Fortune 500 companies had at least one founder who was an immigrant or child of immigrants. Immigrants are natural risk-takers. Imagine the internal fortitude necessary to uproot your family and move thousands of miles away, where you know no one and don't speak the language. It's that kind of dynamism that drives an economy.

Regardless of legal status, Dreamers are American. They've lived their entire lives here. Deporting them robs everyone. Dreamers are robbed of opportunity, and Ohioans are robbed of the benefits to the economy they would bring.

Portman and Brown have expressed a desire to find a legislative solution to allow them to stay. The clock is ticking, senators. Livelihoods are hanging in the balance. Do right by the Dreamers in Ohio and across the country and find a way to spare them from deportation.