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## We must protect DACA

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The decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is horrendous for many reasons, and serves no real purpose for the president's objectives. On the campaign trail, President Donald Trump made illegal immigration an issue — especially the notion of constructing a border wall. However, the most consequential decision he has made on this has no effect on curbing illegal immigration at all. It is a smokescreen to placate supporters who are clamoring for action, any action.

DACA is little more than a presidential executive order that defers the deportation of those undocumented immigrants who were brought here as children, and who meet certain eligibility requirements, of which there are six.

First, they must be born on or before June 16, 1981 and brought to the U.S. before the age of 16. They must now have no current legal immigration status and have lived continuously in the U.S. since June 15, 2007. They must be currently in school, graduated or have attained a GED, or be an honorably discharged veteran. They must also have a clean criminal record.

Those affected by DACA are those who have grown up in the United States and know only America as their country. It defers their deportation to an unknown country for two years allowing them time to gain legal resident status and build a life in America. It is in no manner a pathway to citizenship.

Beginning during the Clinton administration, the U.S. began stricter enforcement of the border with Mexico as workers were passing back and forth for work while their families remained in Mexico. To avoid the risks of the stepped up patrols, they brought their families with them and remained. Changes in immigration law made it nearly impossible to gain legal status, leaving these children growing up in a country where they could never be legal residents or citizens.

These children, known as Dreamers, are the ones affected by DACA which allows them to pursue the American dream in a nation made of dreamers. What exactly do they get with this? Well, they get the two-year deferment, a social security card, driver's license (in most states), ability to establish credit, get a job with benefits and put their utilities in their own name. There is no amnesty or fast track to citizenship.

As students, they do not receive any student grants, such as Pell grants, and are subject to the same eligibility requirements for loans as everyone else. Dreamers are not eligible for SSI, food stamps, TANF, Medicaid or countless other federal programs, other than for emergencies. Any immigrant must live in the U.S. with 'permanent resident status' for five years before they are eligible for these programs.

Does the United States need to review its immigration policies? Absolutely, our current system finds its roots in the outdated Immigration Act of 1965. However, there must be an objective — not just simply a chopping away at it with knee jerk reactions to placate lobbyists and those with legislative agendas and bargaining chips to play.

Sen. Robert F. Kennedy said it well, "Our attitude towards immigration reflects our faith in the American ideal. We have always believed it possible for men and women who start at the bottom to rise as far as the talent and energy allow. Neither race nor place of birth should affect their chances."

If it is money that worries you, then understand that according to the Cato Institute the cost to the economy over the next decade from this move is expected to be \$200 billion. About \$60 billion of which will be in direct tax dollars over those same 10 years. Currently productive and taxpaying workers will now be turned into illegal workers who will ultimately contribute less to the economy. Enforcement and deportation costs will skyrocket, diverting attention away from those requiring immigration and justice department action.

So, together, let us reform immigration, if that is the will of the people. This is not reform. This is an immoral, cruel and inhumane abuse of fellow humans for political jockeying and power. People are not pawns, and we the people, a nation of immigrants and lovers of freedom, should be outraged. No good is served in this for anyone but corrupt politicians who want you to believe this program was allowing more illegal immigrants in and giving them taxpayer-funded benefits. They are playing us to make us afraid of an invasion of immigrants. Hogwash. We must insist this decision be turned around.