



Trump and RNC Put on Cynical Show of Welcoming Immigrants While Slamming Door to Them

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The limitless cynicism and lawlessness of the Trump administration was on full display during the second night of the Republican National Convention. Perhaps the most shameless moment came when President Donald Trump turned a citizenship naturalization ceremony from a nonpartisan moment of celebration into a partisan campaign event. That would have been awful (and illegal) under any circumstance, but it was especially despicable coming from an administration that has slammed the door to the very refugees and legal immigrants it pretended to value Tuesday night.

With the anti-immigrant, white-nationalism-promoting White House aide Stephen Miller driving policy, the Trump administration has not only separated families and caged children at the U.S.-Mexico border, it has also drastically restricted legal immigration and refugee settlement—and to amp up the cruelty, it has specifically targeted the poor.

This spring, Trump used the COVID-19 pandemic as rationale to temporarily suspend legal immigration, and in June, he expanded and extended those moves with a proclamation that “effectively shot down some of the most significant legal immigration avenues for the rest of 2020.”

Last year, in the midst of a global refugee crisis, Trump radically reduced the number of refugees that could settle in the U.S. And in July, with three months left in the fiscal year, his administration had accepted less than half of the already sharply reduced cap.

While Trump has enjoyed extraordinarily high levels of support from white evangelicals and the administration has made a vocal show of support for Christians persecuted around the globe, “the number of Christian refugees admitted to the U.S. after fleeing persecution in their native countries has plummeted 90 percent since 2015,” according to figures from Christian organizations cited by the Washington Post in July.

Keeping immigrants and refugees out has been a priority of the Trump administration since its early days. In October 2018, the libertarian Cato Institute noted that the Trump administration

had slashed the settlement of Muslim refugees by 93 percent and Christian refugees by 64 percent.

Just to put a fine point on the administration's cynicism in flouting the law on night two of the RNC, a White House official told the Wall Street Journal's Rebecca Ballhaus that the administration didn't break the law by politicizing the naturalization ceremony because, they said, the White House "publicized the content of the event on a public website this afternoon and the campaign decided to use the publicly available content for campaign purposes"—essentially daring media and public officials to challenge the obviously false suggestion that the ceremony was not created entirely for purposes of the televised campaign stunt.

Hosting the event with Trump was Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf—holding office illegally—who commended Trump for his "dedication to the rule of law" and for "restoring integrity to our immigration system."