



The Garden City Telegram

Julie Doll: The times Trump wants more immigration

Julie Doll

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In his recent appearance before a convention of conservatives, President Donald Trump again unleashed his fury on immigrants, likening them to snakes and warning the crowd that immigrants wanted to kill them.

Meanwhile, the Washington Post reports that Viktor and Amalija Knavs, who are from Slovenia and are the parents of Melania Trump, are living in the United States and are seeking citizenship.

Trump and his White House refuse to comment on the immigration status of the Knavs.

One might think this is some of that fake news the president warns us about. After all, Trump has repeatedly called for the end of what he calls “chain migration.” He has said immigration laws that allow for family reunification need to be eliminated to guard the nation from dangerous foreigners.

What the president really means is that one set of immigration laws should apply to most of the country, and another set should apply to him and his family’s businesses.

Because it’s not just the in-laws that are behaving contrary to the president’s stated immigration proposals.

Back in January, in a tirade about immigrants, the president used offensive slurs to describe nations from which he wanted to cut off immigration.

The following week, The Hill reported that Trump Winery in Virginia was requesting approval for immigrant workers.

That request came on top of other applications for immigrant workers at other Trump businesses.

Last fall, Trump received approval to hire 70 immigrant workers to work at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Fla.

According to documents filed with the government, Trump is paying his immigrant workers between \$10 and \$15 an hour, the Palm Beach Post reported in November.

The record is clear: Despite the president’s frequent rants about evil immigrants, he supports immigration when it serves his personal and business interests.

That's not a surprise.

And it's not fake news.

But it is a sign that public policy should not be based on the angry rhetoric of a president who can't be bothered to practice what he preaches.

Besides, as many experts have pointed out, what the president preaches is not always accurate.

In a Feb. 9 piece in The Garden City Telegram, reporter Mark Minton covered a presentation by attorney Donald Berner.

Berner, an employment lawyer and partner at Foulston Siefkin in Wichita, was speaking to a group of personnel professionals in southwest Kansas. He noted that family members who want to immigrate to the United States typically wait at least seven years to have their applications considered. In the case of hopeful immigrants from Mexico and the Philippines, the waits are much longer, exceeding 20 years in many cases.

The cost is typically as excessive as the wait for those seeking to reunite with children, spouses or parents.

Given the facts, it's misleading to suggest that immigrants are opening the doors for hordes of unvetted relatives to follow on their heels.

So why does the president repeatedly demean immigrants and gin up fear of them?

"Sometimes politicians talk smack to rile up the base and make them think they're doing something ..." Berner said during his presentation.

There are, of course, some criminals among the immigrants who come to America. Just as there are criminals in any group — military veterans, teachers, doctors, farmers or elected officials, for example.

But the evidence shows immigrants are no more likely to commit crimes than U.S.-born citizens.

Alex Nowrasteh, writing for the conservative Cato Institute, notes that credible research into prison numbers shows immigrants are probably less likely to commit crime. He says anti-immigration politicians can't have it both ways.

"They cannot assume that illegal immigrants are super-criminals and that their population in the United States is several times higher than it really is. No matter how you dice the numbers, their incarceration rate falls as their estimated population increases. ..."

Nowrasteh isn't quite right.

You can have it both ways, but only if you choose dishonest rhetoric over facts and ignore sound national policy while pursuing personal benefit.