



Deportation Isn't a Dirty Word

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July 11, 2018

Deportation isn't inherently cruel but it can be used to menace.

The manner in which many Americans debate illegal immigration and deportation is unfortunate. Daily exaggerations and hysteria by pundits, politicians and protesters convolute, sensationalize and polarize important subject matters that deserve critical-thinking and rich discussion rather than hearsay and regurgitated soundbites.

Both sides of the debate, at times, make fair points. But the middle-ground is eroding and political moderates who aim to weigh-in on illegal immigration and deportation are seemingly without a tribe or amplification.

America isn't served well by extremism. The media is, however, which explains its continuance. In the present day, and particularly on the issue of immigration, cacophony is disguised as profundity. And it sells, so that unrepentant model is propagated throughout the world of news media.

A more productive way to introduce and analyze these topics would be to get all participants to agree on a set of facts. Those preliminary facts are that legal immigration often adds value to a country through diversification; and illegal immigration and deportation are a cause and effect.

Deportation is neither a dirty word nor inherently cruel. It's a necessary function of government that can, like many things, be valuable when used appropriately and with moderation. But the act and the word can also be used to menace unassuming undocumented people, which is the accusation leveled against the Trump Administration.

U.S. President Donald J. Trump is never shy to share his thoughts on illegal immigration and he makes full use of exaggeration. Mr. Trump's assertions, in fact, contribute to the convoluted debate. That's not to say his entire argument is without merit. But his hyperbole overshadows whatever legitimate concern he expresses.

Mr. Trump states America must have strong borders that are protected as to mitigate illegal immigration. This could be perceived as a common-sense proposition unless you favor open borders. But rather than offer his plan based on its pragmatism, Mr. Trump sells it with fear by lamenting the threat posed by illegal immigrants.

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A February 2018 study disproves the president's favorite soundbite that illegal immigrants breed crime. Immigrants in the country illegally were 25 percent less likely to be convicted of homicide than native-born Americans, the study by the Cato Institute, which used 2015 crime statistics from Texas, found. The study also noted that immigrants in the country illegally were 11.5 percent less likely than native-born Americans to be convicted of sexual assault and 79 percent less likely to be convicted of larceny.

And a March 2018 study in the journal *Criminology*, cited by NPR in an article meant to fact-check the U.S. president, shows that violent crime appears to fall when more immigrants are living in a community illegally.

Nonetheless, illegally is the key word. Americans are expected to follow the law or face some sort of consequence. And the same should be true for non-U.S. citizens. It's certainly not fair to pardon all illegal immigrants in the name of sympathy while the majority of Americans aren't treated with such compassion.

Deportation is a consequence and, at times, it has to occur. There must be order. But there must also be thoughtfulness and moderation.

This issue isn't an easy one to address and solving the problem of illegal immigration is even harder. But it could be made easier if we, as Americans, start listening to one another, are willing to meet on the middle-ground and can commit to silencing exaggeration and lies.