



Republicans Want To Cage Immigrants Indefinitely And Call It A Compromise

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Make no mistake: Donald Trump's executive order has not and will not free immigrant children from their cages. Instead, he's asking Republicans in Congress to produce legislation that will keep immigrant children locked up with their parents — indefinitely.

The president's Wednesday order to backtrack on his administration's policy of family separation now sets the stage for two immigration bills that Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) is scheduled to bring up for a vote in the House on Thursday.

One of the bills has been conveniently labeled a "compromise" that would purport to stop the separation of families and protect Dreamers from the claws of Trump's "deportation force." In reality, it's nothing but a Trojan horse that disguises the White House's xenophobic agenda; Trump and the GOP don't negotiate in good faith with anyone — especially when it comes to the issue of immigration.

This "compromise" is hardly a breakthrough agreement between House Republicans and Democrats. It's an agreement between Republican extremists and Republican slightly-less-extremists that the speaker has orchestrated to kill two birds with one stone: put an end to the crisis that Trump and his senior adviser Stephen Miller created (children being taken from their parents at the border) while selling the American people a poisonous legislative package that further erodes our nation's values.

Right now, the GOP is counting on the fact that you, their constituents, are so disgusted by the images and audio of children in detention — a consequence of a policy the Trump administration enacted earlier this year — that you would be willing to support any and all legislative remedy. Why else do you think they would blame the Democrats and call this a "law" that needs changing? (Again, there was never a law requiring family separation, and Trump's order is itself an admission that the administration never needed congressional action to change the policy.)

Why else would Trump throw his fervent support behind not one, not two, but three immigration proposals?

Saying or writing 'our country is better than this' no longer gives you a pass.

The answer is really quite simple: At the end of the day, the Trump administration and the Republican Party don't care about what happens to immigrants or their families. They care about

restricting immigration into the United States. Anyone paying even the smallest attention to the constant changes and attacks on immigrants and their families can see that.

Let's take a look at the trash the GOP is hoping Americans will buy out of desperation to save migrant children and Dreamers:

The first, hard-line bill is sponsored by Republican Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) — a part-time Congressman and full-time xenophobe — who has filed a proposal known as the Securing America's Future Act, which mirrors the Trump administration's immigration wish list that was lambasted and defeated in the U.S. Senate earlier this year in a 39-60 vote.

If you're familiar with Trump's four pillars on immigration — an end to the diversity visa program, restricting legal immigration to the United States, a non-solution for Dreamers, and funding for a border wall — then you have seen this bill before.

The second, so-called “compromise” bill is the Security and Immigration Reform Act, a bill so similar to Goodlatte's proposal that it's hard to tell them apart. Ryan and his band of moderates would like you to believe that this bill would stop family separation at the border and give Dreamers the relief they so desperately need.

Guess what? It does neither of those things.

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This bill would keep children and their families detained indefinitely while they are prosecuted by Jeff Session's Department of Justice. That's right: Children and families could be detained for months or years under Ryan's compromise. And the Dreamers? The CATO Institute reports that up to 82 percent of Dreamers wouldn't qualify for Ryan's proposed path to citizenship under his bill.

This monstrosity of a bill was born out of a desperate need to kill the discharge petition — a legislative maneuver that Republican moderates used to try and force a vote on several immigration-related measures by circumventing House leadership. This bill is the speaker's sad attempt to please the moderates in his caucus while also pleasing the Republican in chief and his loyalists.

Far gone is the “queen of the hill” strategy that would have allowed an honest vote on a number of measures, including the Dream Act, the more centrist USA Act, the Goodlatte proposal and a bill of Ryan's choosing. For a party that claims to dislike seeing crying children locked up in cages, the Republicans appear to be as out of touch on immigration as ever before. They tried and failed to hold Dreamers like me ransom earlier this year to try to secure funding for the president's border wall. Now, they are holding both toddlers in jails and Dreamers hostage while demanding that we accept their disgusting and half-baked attempt to “solve” these issues.

Worse is the possibility of seeing Republican moderates vote for Ryan's bill. Have they forgotten about the communities and families in the districts they represent? You can't seriously vote on what is quite possibly the worst immigration deal yet when you've had numerous chances to get behind better and more serious pieces of legislation. Voting for this sorry excuse of a “compromise” won't get you the sympathy of anyone — not even Dreamers. Please, save your apologies for the campaign trail, when you are asked why you came up empty-handed or

agreed to toxic immigration legislation that nobody but Trump, Sessions and Miller want to see enacted.

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Immigrants are people, and their immigration status — or lack thereof — doesn't mean they're animals or rapists or murderers or drug dealers. I am sick and tired of seeing my life, and the lives of millions of people in this country, being used as political chess pieces that politicians use when it's convenient for them. It wasn't enough to go after the hard-working families who live in constant fear of Trump's hard-line immigration policies; now, we are criminalizing families fleeing violence in their home countries.

As the outrage about family separation continues to grow, I hope we as a country are collectively looking at ourselves in the mirror. Saying or writing "our country is better than this" no longer gives you a pass. If you haven't called your member of Congress and demanded real, concrete solutions to family separation, then what are you waiting for? It doesn't matter whether you have a Democrat or a Republican representing you in Congress. They need to hear from you — and they need to hear from you now.

Show the Republican Party that a zero tolerance policy on immigration will never be a winning strategy. The Trump administration needs to stop traumatizing children and parents fleeing dangerous conditions in their home country. These are human beings who are in need of protection and opportunity, not detention.

This fight is not just about immigrants, Dreamers or children in cages. It's about human decency and our values as a people. Demand real solutions to these issues from your congressperson — or pledge to vote them out of office in the upcoming elections.