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US must offer safe refuge to immigrants fleeing danger

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There has been a lot of attention paid to the drama at our southern border as children, even nursing babies, have been taken away from parents seeking asylum in the U.S. Much false information has been shared. After watching an interview with Maria, a woman from Honduras, I felt compelled to dig up as many facts as possible from government sources and sites like Snopes and FactCheck.

The policy of removing children started on June 15, 2018 by order of Attorney General Jeff Sessions. Over a six week period around 2,000 children were taken and sent to foster homes and detention centers. Accurate numbers are hard to come by. No plans were made about how to return these children. In past administrations children were sometimes placed in detention centers, but only in cases where they were unaccompanied minors and needed to be held until plans could be made for them.

Generally in the past people coming over the border were single Mexican men looking for work, and certainly some were bringing drugs. Now we have an influx of families from Honduras, and other Central American countries, fleeing horrifically dangerous gang violence. Sessions has stated that fleeing gang violence is “no excuse” to apply for amnesty. Tell that to Maria whose husband was killed and 13-year-old-daughter raped. Honduras has become one of the most dangerous countries in the world.

Sessions and Trump have called out amnesty seekers as being abusive to their children by taking them on the long dangerous trip through Mexico. Common sense would say that the Hondurans must believe the danger at home is worse than the dangers of the trip. Maria sold everything she had, gave the money to a guide, and spent a month walking, riding on the tops of trains, and staying awake to keep her 8-year-old son and her daughter alive. Her children were taken away when she presented her papers legally asking for amnesty at our border. The Trump administration would have you believe that these are all dangerous people coming to kill you. What coverage I’ve seen show exhausted, scared families looking for safety.

Quick facts you can easily check include a CATO Institute’s report that says illegal immigrants are 49 percent LESS likely to commit crimes, and legal immigrants are 69 percent LESS likely to commit crimes than American born citizens. A 500-page report from Bloomberg finds that immigrants actually have a positive effect on our economy. Other studies back that up.

Removing children from their families has become a billion dollar a year industry according to DSHS.

At the end of the interview with Maria she said she can't eat or sleep because she worries if her children are safe. She said, "children are God's greatest gift to us." This could be a watershed moment for our country. We know there will be some bad people trying to enter our country, but certainly our hearts should be big enough to accommodate a strong brave women like Maria.