

Immigration News 2/16/18

Senate Rejects Four Immigration Bills

Slate, 2/15/18

Thursday the Senate debated and voted on four bills that would have offered a path toward citizenship for the DACA Dreamers - the 1.8 million undocumented immigrants brought to the country as children and raised in the USA. This succinct article summarizes the bills, all of which failed to get the 60 votes required to withstand a filibuster. The bill that got the fewest votes, losing by a 39-60 margin, was Senator Charles Grassley's approach, the proposal favored by the Trump administration. It would have offered the Dreamers a path to citizenship and authorized billions in border wall spending as well as making sharp cuts in legal immigration. Reporter Jim Newell concludes: "If you're looking for someone to blame, the guy who ended Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and then did everything in his power to block the bill with the best chance of fixing the problem is a good place both to start and finish."

Conservatives See No DACA Bill as Win

New York Times, 2/15/18

This article analyzes the Senate's failure to come up with a solution to the DACA Dreamers issue as a smart politics played by Donald Trump. The lack of action satisfies his base of voters, many of whom hew to a hard line on immigration. As the reporter puts it, "At first [Trump's plan] struck many conservatives as too generous because it would offer 1.8 million young immigrants who came to the United States illegally as children the opportunity to become citizens. But by coupling his offer with demands to sharply reduce legal immigration — a trade-off many Democrats say they cannot accept — then threatening to veto anything that does not meet those demands, the president has made a bipartisan compromise exceedingly difficult." In short, fear of the conservative Republican base and the right-wing media talkers has once again derailed a bipartisan effort to fix the country's immigration problem.

Pro-Immigrant: A Winning Strategy

New York Times, 2/11/18

Democratic pollster Matt A. Barreto argues that electoral victories in Nevada, New Jersey, and Virginia demonstrate that Democratic candidates can win elections with a pro-immigrant strategy. In particular, exit poll data show that Republican Ed Gillespie's MS-13 scare ads in the recent Virginia governor's race backfired and helped drive college-educated white voters to his opponent. "This means," Barreto writes, "that not only is it morally just for Democrats to position themselves as the party that stands against hatred and bigotry and in favor of inclusiveness and opportunity, but it is also a strategically sound position for winning votes. "

Beyond the Dreamers

Washington Post, 2/9/18

This review of three books on Dreamers and their parents helps us understand the complexities of life as an immigrant in the USA and the tension between different types of immigrants in devising political strategies to achieve legal status. There are 690,000 Dreamers and a total of 11 million undocumented immigrants in this country. Reviewer Carlos Lozada writes that the media's focus on the plight of the Dreamers and their success as educated model immigrants tends to leave out other indispensable immigrants - "the nannies, the gardeners, the food service workers and, of course, the old."

Trump's Scare Tactics Recall Nazi Era

Washington Post, 2/9/18

Each Friday the White House sends out a report to news media titled "Immigration Crime Stories Round Up." This is part of an ongoing Trump tactic to depict undocumented immigrants as criminals threatening the American way of life. The administration is particularly fond of invoking the gang MS-13 as a threat. Some have

pointed out that this tactic is reminiscent of the Nazis' technique of emphasizing stories about Jewish crimes in the party's publications.

Here reporter Philip Bump analyzes one of these weekly reports and finds that the White House has given up the distinction between undocumented and legal immigrants in reporting crimes. Only two of the nine items in the report analyzed deal with crimes committed by the undocumented. Furthermore, studies report that immigrants are actually far less likely to commit crimes than native-born Americans. The clincher: USG statistics show that an average of 23,077 violent crimes are committed each week in this country. Last week the White House documented that two were committed by illegal immigrants.

