



Talking Points: Stop Deporting Immigrant Parents

Topline Message: The Trump administration is deporting the parents of U.S. citizens, adding trauma and toxic stress to children's lives. These policy choices go against our values and make us a weaker society. A better solution would be to keep families together and for Congress to pass immigration reform.

Trump is deporting the parents of U.S. citizens.

Over four million children under the age of 18 live with a parent who is undocumented. The vast majority of these children are U.S. citizens. Also, more than 500,000 American citizens have parents with DACA or TPS, two programs the Trump administration has attempted to cancel so it can deport them.

The Trump administration is actively deporting the parents of young children, refusing to consider the impact this has on their mental and physical health.

A parent's deportation adds trauma and stress to children's lives, along with economic insecurity. This harms their mental and physical health for the long-term.

Child development research is clear about the importance of the early years in a child's physical, social, and emotional development, and the long-term harm posed by toxic stress. The research also shows that a young child's development is further undermined by the cumulative effect of experiencing multiple types of hardships simultaneously—such as loss of a parent, food insecurity, and lower household income.

(CW) Parents report that children have turned to self-harm, and even suicide, after their deportation. Children often get behind in school and act out in self-destructive ways. Families also face severe poverty, malnutrition, and homelessness due to a breadwinner's removal from the home. These tragic results are both predictable and avoidable. The government must consider the impact on children before deporting a parent.

The Trump administration is not only disregarding the impact of deportation on children, it is accelerating it. The cruelty is the point.

Trump administration officials often say that the cruelty behind their immigration policies is deliberate. They are trying to make life so difficult for immigrants that they “give up” and “go home.” They completely disregard the impacts of these policies on children, families, and society.

This is true across multiple administrative initiatives, whether we are talking about family separations at the border; deportation of parents from the interior; workplace immigration raids; or the cancellation of DACA and TPS. Not only are children’s needs disregarded in these policy choices, but they are actively being used as pawns by the U.S. government.

Harming children goes against our values as a country.

Children are one of society’s most vulnerable groups. And, it’s our job to make sure they grow up healthy and strong. Instead of adding to their stresses and burdens, we should be doing everything possible to help them succeed.

Harming our nation’s children also harms our collective future.

If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it’s that we are all connected. My future depends on your well-being, and vice versa. The trauma of a parent’s deportation is something children will deal with for the rest of their lives. They are our future leaders, and if their potentials are destroyed or delayed, we all bear the consequences.

A parent’s love for his/her children is stronger than the Trump administration’s hatred.

All children benefit from having stable homes and caregivers. That is why these deportations are so needlessly cruel.

Children are already under tremendous strain because of the pandemic. Deportation of a loved one would add to their anxieties.

The pandemic has affected every aspect of children's lives, disrupting their routines, schooling, and social outlets in addition to financial difficulties many families are facing. Congress has failed to provide support for many immigrant families. The administration should not add the stress of deportation and family separation to children’s list of worries.

Large-scale immigration enforcement actions put a strain on local communities already struggling to respond to COVID-19’s health and economic impacts.

Immigration raids and other enforcement actions tax already overwhelmed and under-resourced health, education, and social service providers. Community resources, like food banks and emergency services, are already struggling to respond to the

COVID crisis and should not be burdened with additional, unnecessary family tragedies to handle.

Many immigrants facing deportation work in jobs now deemed “essential” in the pandemic.

The COVID crisis has brought the contributions of immigrant workers into even clearer view. Alongside U.S. citizens, many immigrants harvest and process the food we eat; work in grocery stores and medical offices; and help care for America’s children, elderly people, and others. The United States must honor and support the role that all essential workers play, at great risk to themselves and their families, including those who are immigrants.

We need immigration policies that reflect our values as a nation. Policies that separate parents and children cannot be justified in our society, which values family unity and parental love. Just look at the outrage about the U.S. government’s separation of families at the southwest border. Families are being separated in the interior of the country too, we just don’t see their faces and hear their cries as often in the news. This is a stain on our nation’s conscience and an affront to the values we claim to hold dear.

Instead of arresting immigrant workers, our government should embrace immigrants seeking a better life as valued members of our communities. It is unfair to put children and families through this extreme stress, when a parent’s only objective is to build a future for his or her children in a safe and stable country. We need to value the lives of all people contributing to the United States, including the children of immigrants, by ending these aggressive deportations.

There are better choices we could make; policies that keep children’s wellbeing front and center. We need to:

- End “expedited removal,” worksite immigration raids, and other anti-family enforcement actions.
- Keep children’s wellbeing at the forefront of all immigration decisions, including deportation. Stop threatening children’s access to health care, nutrition, and stable homes just to carry out an anti-immigrant ideology.
- Protect the rights of all workers, including immigrants.
- Include immigrant families in COVID-19 relief programs and our nation’s recovery.
- Pass immigration reform in Congress, so that children in the United States no longer have to face heart-breaking family separation, and families torn apart by deportation can be reunited.