

## Opinions

# The wall goes up. The ‘dreamers’ stay.

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By **Hugh Hewitt** January 11 at 7:57 PM

Just under 800,000 people received permits to stay and work in the United States under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program begun by President Barack Obama. President Trump has announced the program’s end, pending a lawsuit winding its way through the courts. It now falls to Congress to decide the fate of the “dreamers.” There are some conservatives who will say that any deal that lets the dreamers stay in the country is amnesty. But the truth is that there is an obvious compromise that balances dreamers and security.

Like the entries of the dreamers into the United States, the Obama administration’s order establishing DACA was in the minds of many — laypeople and lawyers alike — illegal. The nearly 700,000 current DACA enrollees, though, are not court cases or hypothetical exam questions in a constitutional law class. They are people with families and jobs. A very small percentage are felons, convicted or otherwise, but as most people are not violent criminals, neither are the vast majority of dreamers. They are just ordinary people.

Check that. “There are no ordinary people,” theologian and writer C.S. Lewis concluded in his essay “The Weight of Glory.” He continued, “You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations — these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit — immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously — no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption.” Lewis’s baseline assumption about there being no “ordinary people” applies to dreamers, and that assumption ought to inform the debate about their future under the law.

Of course, legislators have to be concerned not just with the dreamers but with the incentives communicated by their regularization, and with the need to protect U.S. citizens and U.S. sovereignty. So we must be worried about people — often minors — who die trying to reach our southern border because they believe it easy to cross: who are abused in the process, exploited, raped, held hostage. We also have to strengthen security at a border where deadly and powerfully large rivers of fentanyl, heroin and, more broadly, violence course into the country daily.

Fortunately, a legislated deal between these competing interests is obvious: regularization of the 700,000 who can show they have not been involved in violence or criminal enterprise; a significant investment in border security, including the 700-plus

miles of wall; an explicit rejection of “chain migration” entitlement or preference for the dreamers; and an end to the absurd “diversity visa lottery.”

To repeat: It really is the most obvious of bargains. Whoever causes this compromise to collapse not only is not public spirited, they are themselves opponents of rational self-government. If our government cannot do the easy deals, how will it ever accomplish the difficult ones?

President Trump has promised to sign such a congressional compromise. Who is going to announce that they put politics ahead of these 700,000 and the other manifestly sane and necessary steps on security? Whoever those people are, they are most definitely not on the side of the angels.

This compromise is not amnesty. A long, strong fence and additional security measures aren't the Berlin Wall, nor are their proponents totalitarians. After all the posturing and the rhetoric is done and said, my take is that a large majority of Americans can agree on this plan. Can Congress, just this once, get its act together and, in a bipartisan fashion by large majorities, do an obviously good thing? Just do it, and then move on. What a concept.

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Hugh Hewitt, a Post contributing columnist, hosts a nationally syndicated radio show and is author of “The Fourth Way: The Conservative Playbook for a Lasting GOP Majority.” [!\[\]\(c50c8b7b2cc2cf9ff925edec0ee94c0d\_img.jpg\) Follow @hughhewitt](#)