
Trump's Rhetoric and Undocumented Immigrants

James Bowie, Sam Houston, Davy Crockett and William Travis all left their native country and moved west to make a new start. Their destiny helped shape what we know as Texas today.

Both Bush presidents, 41 and 43, were born in the Northeast but moved to Texas for a promise of a better tomorrow. Texas has long been a place of hope for immigrants of all ages, origins, eras and beliefs, and my family is no different. Like Bowie, I was born in Kentucky but now call Texas home. The free movement and welcome of people and ideas has made our state and our nation the envy of the world. Unfortunately, instead of driving a discussion of how immigration policy can be improved to continue strengthening our country and economy, hyperbole and assumptions — not facts — have turned immigration into a wedge issue in this presidential race.

Republican nominee Donald Trump has advocated for the restriction of practically every legal immigration pathway and for the mass deportation of more than 15 million people in this country, including the U.S.-born children of undocumented immigrants. He says immigrants "steal" American jobs and threaten the national security of our country. Trump is wrong. As a business leader, an Army veteran and a student of history, I know this couldn't be further from the truth.

Throughout my career, I've seen immigrants make substantial contributions to our common defense, wearing the U.S. Army uniform, and to our economy, wearing work boots, aprons and business suits. I've talked with CEOs whose businesses depend on the work ethic and reliability of immigrants. And in the high-tech arena, I've worked shoulder-to-shoulder with immigrants committed to creating innovative products and jobs for all of us.

In my own journey as a high-tech entrepreneur, immigrants have played an important role every step of the way. The U.S. economy is far too large to be fueled only by native-born Americans. Immigrants have long been important to the fabric of the United States because they help contribute to our overall security — both economic and national security. For example, Chinese-born entrepreneur Liang Ge earned an electrical engineering degree from Texas A&M University. His company, Acoustic Shield, has developed a life-saving sensor that can detect gunshots in public spaces. It alerts first responders within milliseconds, compared to current technology, which can take as long as 15 minutes. The result is faster response times. Liang is helping keep American communities safe. Also consider Austin-based entrepreneur Mohit Tiwari. Mohit came to the United States in 2005 to study for his Ph.D. in computer science. He currently works as an assistant professor at the University of Texas at Austin while developing a data security startup that adds critical security protections to developers' applications. It's thanks to entrepreneurs like Mohit that we'll be prepared to tackle the security challenges of the 21st century. Liang and Mohit are certainly not the only transplants who have contributed to our overall security.

Since Alexander Hamilton, who was born in the Caribbean, immigrated to the United States in the 1700s, our economy has been fueled by new ideas and innovation from both documented and undocumented immigrants. Instead of deporting millions of children, women and men who help make America safer and stronger, we should focus our removal efforts on serious

threats. Creating a blanket mass deportation policy would be disastrous for all immigrants, regardless of legal status. It would hinder community policing efforts by creating distrust between police officers and immigrant communities. Enforcement efforts would strain our resources and send us spiraling into deeper debt. Above all, our efforts would be misguided, particularly because immigrants are less likely than native-born Americans to commit violent crimes. Those who do are in the minority and should be deported — and commonsense immigration reform would achieve that.

Alternatively, a pathway to legal status for undocumented immigrants would establish a new transparency so we can determine who is actually a threat to our country. Legal status would also give undocumented immigrants the confidence necessary to report serious crimes, making America safer for us all. I urge our leaders in Congress to reject the scapegoating and xenophobic rhetoric of the Trump campaign and to take up efforts to pass commonsense immigration reform in the first 100 days of the next Congress. Bolstering our border security with strategic fencing, additional manpower, and the newest technology; updating our legal system to meet the immigration demands of our economy; and providing a pathway to legal status for undocumented immigrants is the clear alternative to Mr. Trump's misguided proposals. Don't let Trump mess with Texas — or with any other part of the United States. Disclosure: Joseph Kopser has been a financial supporter of The Texas Tribune. A complete list of Tribune donors and sponsors can be viewed [here](#).