

Andy Barr Talking Points for October 10, 2017

Talking Points for Andy Barr Office Visit, Oct. 10, 2017

Synopsis

Andy Barr has made few comments about undocumented immigrants during his time in office. What he has said is, ***“called DACA an unconstitutional overreach that failed to meaningfully or permanently address the status of undocumented child immigrants”***. He added ***“I believe we should show our compassion for these children in a way that does not dishonor the millions of new citizens who immigrated to this country through lawful means.”*** First, DACA does fail to permanently address the status of undocumented child immigrants. It gives them temporary status that must be renewed every two years. So that part of his statement is correct. However, it has not been proven to be unconstitutional overreach or a failure to meaningfully address DACA status. DACA individuals will tell you it has significantly impacted them for the better in terms of higher wages, access to higher education, driver’s license and legitimacy they lacked before. The only aspect currently being challenged (not reviewed by the Supreme Court) is the DAPA program to do the same for parents of undocumented immigrants. Barr’s second statement that ***“we should show compassion that does not dishonor the millions of new citizens who immigrated to this country through lawful means”***, is a swipe at undocumented immigrants (often referred to as ‘illegals’) as somehow less deserving than the typical refugee or immigrant admitted to the US. This despite of their contributions, demonstrated desire and willingness to be assimilated into US society. ***Barr recently touted the only piece of legislation he has co-sponsored related to undocumented DACA individuals – the ENLIST Act. This piece of legislation will “require” DACA individuals to serve in the armed forces in addition to meeting all other conditions currently imposed on Dreamers, before being allowed a pathway to US citizenship.*** While it will provide a pathway to citizenship (which DACA could not do), it arbitrarily lowers the age at which they could have entered into the US from 16 years of age to 15 years of age. Thus the following questions.

QUESTIONS

- 1.** US laws are enforced with regard to the human factor, and crimes are often judged by juries and judges to ensure people are treated in a fair and impartial way with regard to their transgressions. About 1/3rd of DACA individuals came to the US when they were 5 years old or younger. ***What crime do you believe they committed at this age by accompanying their parent(s) to the US without even knowing they were required to enter lawfully? Do you believe the US is justified treating these individuals like criminals because of the actions of their parents, deporting and expelling them from the US to countries in which they may not even know the language or its customs, let alone have any reasonable opportunity for success?***
- 2.** You have not supported any legislation that would directly provide DREAMer’s or those who fall under that DACA definition any protections or extensions of their status. Instead, you have supported a piece of legislation demanding they jump through yet one more hoop (enlistment in the armed forces to prove their loyalty to this country) before they would be allowed a pathway to citizenship, something not required of any legal immigrants. ***Please explain this position in view of your answer to question #1 and also justify the arbitrarily lowering the age of entry to the US from the prior 16 years of age to 15 years of age by ENLIST.***
- 3.** It has been shown over the last 5 years, just allowing DACA individuals to live in the US legally increases their quality of life, their wages, educational achievements and contributions to this country and its tax base. The US has far more to lose economically and in terms of its reputation for human rights by their expulsion than their acceptance into US society. ***Why have you done so little to facilitate that effort while in office instead of increasing the opportunity for these individuals, particularly since there are over 1,000 DACA eligible individuals in your 6th District?***

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4. The majority of most undocumented immigrants each year since about 2007 has been by overstaying their visas, not by crossing a US border illegally. This is true even for those entering via the Mexico border. In Kentucky, as elsewhere in the US, the number of undocumented immigrants who have lived in the US more than 10 years has been steadily increasing (it is 40% in Kentucky currently). ***Why have you supported stronger border protection as the means for securing against undocumented immigration instead of focusing on the more obvious checking and enforcing expired visa permits which now accounts for about 2/3rds of yearly undocumented immigration?***