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Opinion

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OUR VIEW

'Birthright' citizenship is intriguing, but what of the 12 million?

President Trump created a firestorm — a phrase that could describe almost any of his actions — when he said last month that he would issue an executive order ending “birthright” citizenship for children born in the U.S. to parents who are illegal immigrants.

Like most Americans, we have taken it for granted that the Constitution, specifically the 14th Amendment, grants citizenship to anyone born in the United States. Though we’ve often heard rousing debate on whether that makes sense, we were oblivious until last week that there existed legitimate scholarly debate on whether the Constitution really means what we think it means.

We admit that critics of our interpretation make an intriguing argument.

Prior to the 14th Amendment’s ratification in 1868, the Constitution was silent on the



Central American migrants begin their morning trek as part of a thousands-strong caravan hoping to reach the U.S. border, upon departure Monday from Cordoba, Veracruz state, Mexico.

question of citizenship. It did give Congress the power to legislate how non-citizens could be naturalized.

The amendment was passed and ratified in the wake of the Civil War. Slavery had been abolished by the 13th Amendment, but former slaves born in the United States and their children, born free or

otherwise, were not guaranteed citizenship. Many states, even some Union “free” states, did not extend citizenship to blacks and other nonwhites.

The 14 Amendment says: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State

wherein they reside.”

The key issue, the argument goes, is what is meant by “subject to the jurisdiction thereof.” It’s the kind of arcane nuance that can set jurisprudence on its ear.

For several decades “all persons” didn’t mean everyone. Most American Indians, for example, were not granted citizenship until a 1924 act of Congress because they were subject to tribal jurisdiction. The children born here of ambassadors are not citizens because their parents are not subject to U.S. law.

While the Supreme Court has ruled a child born here to immigrant parents in the country legally is a citizen, it has not specifically ruled on the question of birthright citizenship for the children of illegal immigrants.

We think children born in the United States are citizens of the United States, regardless of how their parents came to be here. It

appears that opinion could be tested in court.

In the meantime, a bigger issue than the extent of birthright citizenship is the status of some 12 million illegal immigrants living here.

If we are to honor the rule of law, they cannot be allowed to stay in the shadows as they have for decades.

We continue to believe the answer is to offer illegal immigrants with otherwise clean criminal records temporary legal status and a path to permanent residency (but not citizenship) after 10 years if they meet strict requirements. We think the border should be secured. A viable guestworker program must be established, and employers must verify the work status of their employees.

Let them stay, or make them go. Only Congress can do this, and we think Congress should act.

OUR VIEW



What is, and isn't, milk?

You have to hand it to the makers of “milk” made from soybeans, almonds, hemp and other non-dairy crops. It was a stroke of genius to label their products in a way that would cause consumers to equate them with real milk. As in milk from cows or other mammals.

According to “The Agriculture Dictionary” by Ray V. Herren and Roy L. Donahue, milk is “the natural whitish or cream-colored liquid discharged by the mammary glands of mammals.” By that definition, soy “milk” and other types of drinks made from nuts and other crops would not qualify. It’s that simple.

The dairy industry has for years contested the fact that the Food and Drug Administration and USDA have allowed manufacturers of all sorts of drinks to call their products “milk.” Soy milk, rice milk, oat milk, almond milk, coconut milk, cashew milk, macadamia milk, hemp

milk — even quinoa milk.

The problem: These descriptions are wrong. Faux “milks” have vastly different ingredients with vastly different nutritional values than real milk from cows or any other mammal.

Soy “milk” is no more milk than beer is “barley milk,” whiskey is “corn milk” and vodka is “potato milk.” Just because the makers may want to identify their product with milk doesn’t make it so.

It’s like a 5-foot-5 man putting on a LeBron James jersey and then trying to pass himself off as a basketball star. It’s just not correct.

Under the reasoning allowed by FDA and USDA you could label a bicycle as a “car.” After all, they both have wheels and transport people and the details

don’t really matter.

There’s only one problem: It’s simply wrong to call anything — a drink, a substance or a mode of transportation — something that it is not.

This is not to say drinks made from soybeans or any other crop are not good, they just aren’t milk. Nor are they orange juice, coffee or banana daiquiris. They are what they are: mixtures of various ingredients, none of which is milk.

The FDA is finally getting around to weighing the arguments of the dairy industry in considering whether to continue its passive role in allowing manufacturers to label their non-dairy drinks “milk.” We hope the FDA finally starts doing its job in regulating these labels. If not, we’ll look forward to other manufacturers that will consider this a license to label foods anything they want.

In the meantime, we’ll continue to ponder the issue over a nice, frosty mug of “barley milk.”



USMCA a trade deal for the 21st century

By **SONNY PERDUE**
U.S. Agriculture Secretary

Guest
comment
Sonny Perdue



One of the core promises that swept President Donald Trump into office was that he would renegotiate better deals for the United States with our traditional trading partners.

With the announcement of a new trade pact among the United States, Mexico and Canada, we welcomed the tremendous news that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) will be, if approved by Congress, replaced by a much stronger agreement. Known as the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), the package will be important for American workers and our economy as a whole, including the agricultural sector, which counts Mexico and Canada in our top three trading partners.

I have long said that I believe our country is located in the best neighborhood on Earth — North America — with valuable allies to our north and south. Though the old NAFTA agreement was considered a generally positive compact for agriculture, there was certainly room for much-needed improvement. Under USMCA, we have created new rules to help our farmers, ranchers and workers better face the challenges of the 21st century economy, which will secure greater access to the Mexican and Canadian markets and maintain and improve the highly productive integrated agricultural relationships we have as nations.

The agreement with Mexico came first, near the end of August, and includes a number of provisions sought by the United States. Importantly, 21st century innovations in agricultural biotechnology are addressed for the first time, including cutting-edge processes like gene editing. These innovations serve as a template for agreements in the future. And we mutually pledge to work together to reduce trade-distorting policies, increase transparency and ensure nondiscriminatory treatment in grading of agricultural products.

In addition, the United States and Mexico agreed not to use so-called geographic indicators to restrict the marketing of certain cheeses under common names, such as provolone, Swiss, or ricotta, which the European Union had wanted to restrict.

The second piece of the USMCA puzzle was the negotiation with Canada, where key sticking points centered on dairy issues and were among the last to be cleared. Notably, as one of the president’s top goals, the new agreement will eliminate Canada’s unfair “Class 6” and “Class 7” milk pricing schemes, in which Canada has used low-priced products to undercut United States dairy sales in Canada and other international markets. The deal

will also crack open additional access for United States dairy into Canada, including products like fluid milk, cream, butter, skim milk and cheese, and will also preserve and expand critical access for United States poultry and egg producers.

America’s wheat farmers also get a big win. A reform of Canada’s discriminatory wheat grading process will help United States wheat growers along the border become more competitive. These are all significant victories for American agriculture.

As we celebrate this breakthrough, it is worth noting that there were many detractors who said it could not be done. But the emergence of an agreement is further proof that President Trump’s trade negotiation strategy is working. To strike the best deals possible for the United States, the president has shown that he is willing to walk away from the bargaining table if he feels our country is being unfairly treated. In the case of USMCA, the president’s approach resulted in earnest negotiations among the three nations and a final package which is beneficial for all three countries.

This is not the first major step forward in international trade under the Trump administration, nor do we feel it will be the last. Before President Trump successfully concluded USCMA, he made good on his promise to revise and improve KORUS, the trade pact with the Republic of Korea. Add to these achievements the president’s recent announcement of his intention to negotiate a trade deal with Japan — a significant market for United States agriculture exports that, until recently, had rejected talks of a bilateral agreement with the United States — and growing optimism for a successful trade deal with the European Union, and it is easy to see the dominoes falling.

The president is committed to achieving good trade deals for America — including our current issues with China, which I believe we will surmount as well.

The bottom line is this: Free, fair and expanded trade among nations is good for the American economy and our highly productive farmers, ranchers, foresters and producers. The newly minted USMCA goes in the win column for President Trump and his negotiating team, led by our United States Trade Representative, Ambassador Robert Lighthizer. Our economy, and American agriculture, will be better off for it.

Sonny Perdue is secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.