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# OPINION

## Protecting ‘Dreamers’ is the Right Thing to Do

### Deportation would be shameful

BY MARC H. MORIAL

*“As the leaders of communities across the country—individuals and institutions that have seen these young people grow up in our communities—we recognize how they have enriched and strengthened our cities, states, schools, businesses, congregations, and families. We believe it is a moral imperative that the administration and the country know we are with them. We also join together to send our assurances to Dreamers: we see you, we value you, and we are ready to defend you.”* — *An open letter signed by more than 1,800 governors, attorneys general, mayors, state representatives, judges, police chiefs and other leaders.*

An overwhelming majority of voters — about 85 percent — are opposed to



deporting immigrants who are eligible for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. These “Dreamers,” as they are known, were brought into the United States as children, most of them younger than 7. About 90 percent of Dreamers are employed; more than 70 percent have attended college.

Despite widespread support for allowing Dreamers to remain, the Trump Administration has acquiesced to 10 state attorneys general who threatened to sue if it did not end the program. But even President Trump does not want to deport Dreamers.

“Does anybody really want to throw out good, educated and accomplished young people who have jobs, some serving in the military?” he wrote on Twitter. “Really!...”

Sadly, many of the people who voted for him do, and voted for him because he said he would do it. But even among the most hard-core supporters of the President, those who say they “strong-

ly approve” of his performance, only a third favor deportation of Dreamers.

With this kind of support, it’s hard to understand why 800,000 hard-working, law-abiding contributing members of society are in danger of being wrenched from the only country they’ve ever known. Many do not even speak the language of the countries of their birth.

In addition to the human catastrophe deportation of Dreamers represents, the U.S. would lose about \$460 billion in GDP over the next 10 years and about 700,000 people could lose their jobs.

Earlier this month, 15 states and the District of Columbia filed a suit seeking to stop the repeal of DACA. California just filed a separate lawsuit, which was joined by Maine, Minnesota, and Maryland. Meanwhile, President Trump has struck a tentative agreement from the House and Senate Minority Leaders to support legislation protecting Dreamers in exchange for

enhanced border security.

While there is a chance that deportations of Dreamers will not occur, it’s shameful that they should be in a position to fear it at all. Dreamers trusted the United States government in enrolling in the program, now that very trust could be used against them. There is no justification for ending the program even as a legislative solution is sought.

Protecting Dreamers is quite simply the right thing to do. It is the moral thing to do. It’s the economically sound thing to do. And even though it shouldn’t matter, it’s the popular thing to do. We urge Congress to immediately pass legislation protecting Dreamers and call upon the Trump administration to reinstate DACA so no Dreamer has to fear deportation from the home they love.

*Marc H. Morial is president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League.*

## Militarizing Police under a Cloak of Secrecy

### A misguided reversal in police accountability

BY LISA ROSENBERG

In a move that will further militarize police departments across the country while decreasing accountability, the President issued an executive order that strips away limits on weapons of war that the Defense Department can hand over to state and local police forces.

The President’s order expands an existing Pentagon program that authorizes the transfer of military-grade tactical weapons, surveillance equipment and vehicles to civilian police departments, eliminating restrictions on the types of weapons that can be transferred and vastly reducing oversight of the program.

The weapons program became notorious when police fitted with battle gear were photographed pointing assault weapons at protesters in the streets of Ferguson, Mo. After the images went viral, then-President Barack Obama issued an executive order that placed restrictions on the program and established reporting, oversight and training requirements for law enforce-

ment agencies requesting the military equipment.

The Obama-era order prohibited weapons like bayonets and grenade-launchers from being transferred to local law enforcement. Reversing the ban, the Trump order places weapons designed to be used by soldiers on battlefields in the hands of police, opening the door to intimidation and abuse of civilians which could result in a chilling



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effect on public dissent and protest.

At the same time, abuses will be harder to detect. The President’s executive order will scrap minimal transparency requirements that had applied to the already secretive program, leaving the public in the dark about dangerous weaponry flowing into their communities.

It took a strategic campaign by journalists and open government advocates to pry information from the Pentagon

and local police departments to get basic figures on the amount and type of equipment that local police and sheriffs received, exposing just how prevalent the program is across the country.

Now, even those minimal accountability measures have been stripped away.

Contrary to the administration’s claims that the program will make us safer, expanding the weapons transfers while reducing accountability exacerbates the threat to public safety.

By expanding the program and decreasing safeguards to prevent abuse, the President increases the likelihood that dangerous weapons could fall into the hands of individuals who intend to do us harm.

It now falls to Congress to push back against the creeping authoritarianism evidenced by the President’s decision to further militarize law enforcement while shackling oversight. To preempt this administration’s misguided actions, Congress must, at a minimum,

assert its oversight authority and put in place requirements to ensure that if any transfers are permitted, they are subject to transparency mandates and that the Pentagon and police departments remain accountable to the public.

*Lisa Rosenberg is the executive director of Open the Government, a non-partisan coalition advancing transparency for accountability. Distributed by American Forum.*