

Separating families is not a policy

The tragic turn in U.S. treatment of immigrants at the border will haunt us

BY TARA D. SONENSHINE

There is nothing worse for a child than getting lost — separated from mom or dad, even for a moment, let alone a lifetime.

When Jews were rounded up by the Nazis, families were separated. Many loved ones never found each other, only learning years later who died or survived the Holocaust through determination, escape or liberation. At the start of World War II in 1939, about 1.6 million Jewish children lived in the territories that would become occupied by German armies or allies. When the war ended six years later, more than 1 million Jewish children were dead, and many thousands were left on their own after being hidden or liberated from camps.

Fast forward to today. During his time in office, President Donald Trump has ramped up arrests of immigrants here illegally, including children. In many cases, immigrant children are separated from their parents — separated by borders, fences, walls, laws and rules that remain murky because of a system that has failed to produce comprehensive reform of immigration laws. Beyond the legalities is the pervasive climate of fear and anxiety promoted by Trump and his supporters through social media — leading many people to lose all sensibility and civility in their in-

teractions with people who speak a different language or look non-American.

Some of the policy shifts have generated headlines, including Trump's decision in September to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA. That measure, put in place by former President Barack Obama in 2012, allowed nearly 800,000 young people brought illegally to the United States as children to live, work and study in the country without fear of deportation. A recent court decision questioned the legality of ending DACA and the issue will likely be settled by the U.S. Supreme Court. In the meantime, young people live in the shadows and in fear of being caught.

Over the next few months, life for children of immigrants is likely to get worse in America, Mexico, Central America, Syria and Afghanistan. We are cutting off access to America for people fleeing political persecution and war. Under a new policy adopted recently, the administration vowed to more frequently separate families at the U.S.-Mexico border, for example, using a federal statute that prohibits illegal entry. The policy follows an April announcement by Attorney General Jeff Sessions that calls for U.S. attorney's offices along the border to prosecute cases of suspected illegal entry "to the extent practicable."



A girl who traveled with the caravan of Central American migrants awakens earlier this month at a camp the group set up at the U.S.-Mexico border to request asylum.

AP / HANS-MAXIMO MUSIELIK

The new measure means a broader pool of people caught at the border will likely face criminal charges — including parents who arrive with their children. In turn, the children will be classified as unaccompanied minors, which will put them in the custody of the Health and Human Resources Department until they can be placed with a guardian.

The Statue of Liberty stands each day in the New York harbor

and she must be heartbroken. What has happened to us? Were we not the guardians of freedom, the place of safe passage, a haven for those chased away by pogroms and wars? And what of our children — the young ones who arrive here and find their way to towns and cities and make their parents proud by becoming assets to America, their adopted home?

If we empty our country of all the children, choosing only

those who pass the litmus test of today, we shall become a dark, barren and angry nation.



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New York looks to rackets for revenue



William F.B. O'Reilly

Ten times on the Vikings for Sunday; three Quick Picks and an ounce of the California hydroponic. And can I renew my driver's license while I'm here?"

New York's not there yet, but it shan't be long. Vice is in; prudish government is out. And we're gonna roll fat ones with all the C-notes pouring in. Or so the theory goes.

Legal recreational mari-

juana is probably an election cycle away in New York, and talk about professional sports betting in New York kicked off minutes after a Monday U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing states to go into the book-making business. Eight-to-five that Albany green-lights it next year.

What's it all going to mean? In truth no one knows — and yet everyone knows. Libertine impulses always prove insatiable, individually and collectively. Scratching at them, like at glimmering lottery tickets, hollows us out in time. Look

on the floor of any check-cashing joint.

And still it's a fine line because this is where we are. We no longer want to prosecute marijuana offenses — so we tacitly encourage weed's use — and spendthrift legislators can't bear seeing vigorish in other people's hands.

There's the libertarian impulse, too. Why does government have the right to tell us what to do? That's always a good question. But there's also the social contract: What individual liberties should we voluntarily forgo to ensure that

things don't get away from us as a society? Sixteen-ounce Mountain Dew's are hanging on by a thread.

We know who's going to pay the steepest price if marijuana and sports betting go through. It'll be the addicts, of course. And the poor, dreaming of quick riches or a cheap escape. Statistics bear it out. Triggers for the gamblers be ubiquitous, as for the lottery: Subways Series Tuesday. Make Sure to Support the Team!

But people will gamble and get high anyway, you say. Why not cut out the bookies and

the dealers; why not take the revenue?

Besides, most people aren't addicts. Why can't I enjoy a couple of hits of pot after a long day. Why can't I fill out a weekend betting sheet at the office without having to look over my shoulder?

It all makes perfect sense. And yet, somehow, it feels, with dreaded certainty, that we are sinking deeper into hopelessness.

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