

GUEST COLUMN; Immigration edict delays fix

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For the AJC

Body

To be clear, President Barack Obama's decision wasn't just about deportations. It was also a commitment to grant millions of new work permits.

This presidential **edict** comes at a time when one in two American college graduates is unemployed or underemployed, and when jobs are at a premium for every American.

Perhaps it was a great idea for a president who is trying to find enough votes to get re-elected in November, but it was a bad idea for a president who is tasked by the U.S. Constitution with enforcing the rule of law.

At its core, America is, and has always been, a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws. These roles are in concert --- not conflict --- with one another.

At least they are until a president tries to create laws by decree rather than through the people's representatives in Congress.

The troubling nature of the president's announcement has as much to do with the constitutional separation of powers and the rule of law as it does with **immigration** policy.

The tragic consequence of President Obama's overreach is that it **delays** America even further from finding a permanent solution to our **immigration** challenges, some of the most morally complex problems of our time.

Residents across the country have different ideas about how to confront illegal **immigration**.

I believe we must streamline our current **immigration** laws for temporary workers and permanent residents. We must eliminate those policies that act as magnets to illegal immigrants, policies that provide jobs, birthright citizenship and access to government-financed benefits.

Other folks believe we should offer illegal immigrants a full and immediate path to citizenship.

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No matter what you believe, this much is certain: By ignoring the role of Congress and the people and by choosing instead to rule by **edict**, the president has abandoned any desire for --- and perhaps destroyed any possibility of --- a long-term, bipartisan solution.

He has done that in favor of a quick **fix** designed to earn him the support of a key voting bloc in November.

Much as he implemented this policy with a stroke of the pen, he --- and any future president --- can take it away with just a stroke of the pen.

In effect, he is holding these undocumented young people as political hostages and pinning their hopes for the future on his own re-election.

I represent the most diverse congressional district in all of Georgia. In this district, we celebrate America's history and future, again, as both a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants.

The president's cavalier treatment of both is troubling. There is no question about whether we must work together to find a long-term **immigration** solution for America.

We must.

We must make it simpler for folks who are trying to come here the right way, and tougher on folks who insist on coming the wrong way. But our Founding Fathers intended for debates of this magnitude and decisions of this significance to take place in the halls of Congress, not in the backrooms of the White House. Americans deserve permanent solutions to serious problems, not simply election-year ploys.

Congressman Rob Woodall represents Georgia District 7.

Graphic

Photo: Congressman Rob Woodall represents Georgia District 7. /ImageData*

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