

It's amazing how impassioned ...

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Body

It's amazing how impassioned beliefs can make hash of intelligent political discourse. Recently at my school I was subjected to the sights and sounds of a student walkout on the immigration issue. We often hear about how important it is for young people to "believe in something," but when students take sides on a complex issue and then skip class to yell slogans while others try to learn, my enthusiasm takes a sharp downward turn and hovers near zero when I learn that for many the whole thing was merely an excuse to play hooky. There seems to be no acknowledgment that illegal immigration may be fundamentally unfair to people such as my parents, who have actually worked through the system; there is no consideration of the possibility that immigration requirements may serve a purpose. And what about the underclass that illegal immigration creates? These are all issues to consider, and taking part in trendy protests is no way to consider them.

-- Andrew Saraf

is a student at Bethesda-Chevy Chase

High School in Bethesda.

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We had a walkout this month. I didn't even know there would be a protest; I thought that all the demonstrations were going on near the Mexican border and in California. A friend of mine said, "I will go on up there and just represent where I'm from, you know, show that Salvadorans want to be heard, too."

I was amazed that some did not approve of letting students express their views; I see no reason why students can't protest measures that could keep family members from coming to America. Lately there's been a rumor that another walkout is to be staged, and this time the students do not care who is blocking the door. "You think they can stop 60 or 70 mad kids?" I guess we will find out.

-- Battle Beasley

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It's about a 20-minute drive from Montgomery Blair High School to the U.S. Capitol building. But in some ways, the distance couldn't be greater.

At Blair, there is no immigration "debate." Blair is home to immigrants struggling to complete their high school education after receiving practically no traditional schooling in their home countries. It is home to students who are working long hours after school to support families facing the challenges of living in a new country. And it is home to students who are facing deportation.

As a friend recently pointed out, the bill sponsored by Reps. Pete King and James Sensenbrenner could make felons out of many Blair teachers who help children of illegal immigrants. It prioritizes the political opportunity offered by popular xenophobia over the morality and practicality of helping the illegal immigrants who are already here and will probably never leave. Then again, King and Sensenbrenner haven't visited Blair yet.

-- Armin Rosen

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