

Legal immigrants show they respect citizenship

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Body

I am completely in agreement with the opposing view "Reject birthright **citizenship**." With all the debate over illegal **immigrants** and immigration, the effects both are having on native citizens and the value of **citizenship** are often overlooked (Anchor babies' debate, Aug. 31).

Illegal **immigrants** take jobs from Americans, and no, those jobs are not all ones that Americans won't take. When one is out of work; one will take any job that is available.

I always thought American **citizenship** was to be valued. **Immigrants** came here to be Americans. Learning English, adapting to customs and valuing the freedom we cherish were the tenets of the dream.

The idea of having babies as a way to obtain **citizenship** cheapens the whole idea of being American. In my family, the concept of becoming a citizen involved study, work and assimilation.

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'Anchor babies' hard path

As a **legal immigrant**, I was very interested to read the debate about birthright **citizenship** -- whether babies born to parents who are illegal **immigrants** should be given U.S. **citizenship** ("Should being born in the USA make you a citizen?," Our view).

Gaining **legal** status through family connections is a very difficult process, especially through children. A child born here is a citizen under the Constitution. But that does nothing for the parents. Even if a mother did manage to enter illegally and have a baby, she would still need to wait until the child is 21 to apply for **legal citizenship** status. That means the parents would have to find illegal work and avoid deportation for 21 years.

When they did apply, the applicants' background, as well as the sponsors' financial stability, would be investigated. If a background check determined that they had been in the country illegally, the application could be denied. The process also involves a face-to-face interview with an immigration officer who is looking for people trying to claim immigration through illegal processes.

Having a child who is a U.S. citizen is no guarantee of **citizenship** for the family. The truth is that it is much easier to be an illegal **immigrant** and slip under the radar than it is to go through the process legally.

Stopping "anchor babies" won't stop illegal immigration, or even slow it down. The way to stop illegal immigration is to make it harder for illegal **immigrants** to find employment in this country.

Fraser Clements

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Reading, Pa.

Graphic

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