



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Birthright Citizenship and the 14th Amendment

FRESNO—With the election fast approaching, the radical right has stooped to a last-ditch attempt to transform fear of immigrants into conservative voter turnout. Recently, Donald Trump abruptly announced that he wanted to overrule the 14th Amendment, which ensures everyone born on U.S. soil is a U.S. citizen, known as birthright citizenship. Ending birthright citizenship fulfills one of the most important White nationalist objectives, and Donald Trump appears to agree.

“Trump will do or say anything to energize his cult-like base,” said Michael D. Evans, chair of the Fresno County Democratic Party. “But we need to refocus away from his vitriolic rhetoric toward building on the strength of our diversity to be a true democracy.”

Trump says that the United States is the only country with birthright citizenship. That is not true; about 30 other nations have it, most in the Western hemisphere with our same history of immigrant founders.

Trump says he can overturn an amendment to the Constitution with an executive order. This is not true; he does not have this authority. Regardless of his chances of success, this ridiculous, hateful statement is deeply dangerous and divisive to our nation.

Vice President Mike Pence also suggested that the amendment wording of persons “subject to the jurisdiction thereof (the U.S. government)” did not include people born to undocumented immigrants.

Members of immigrant families know well how much they are under the jurisdiction and the mercy of the U.S. government these days. The thought that the rights of future generations could be stripped away based on the fate of their parents is rightly terrifying. The 14th Amendment was created to stop exactly that, as it fought to end hereditary slavery. We cannot tolerate even threats to return to the days of a legally mandated hereditary underclass.

California alone is home to more than 10 million immigrants, about a quarter of the foreign-born population of the entire country. Repealing birthright citizenship would “create a self-perpetuating class that would be excluded from social membership for generations,” according to an analysis by the Migration Policy Institute.

A 2010 study by the Institute and Pennsylvania State University found that ending birthright citizenship for U.S. babies with two undocumented immigrant parents would increase the existing undocumented population by 4.7 million people by 2050. Denying U.S. citizenship to babies with one parent who is undocumented would balloon the undocumented population to 24 million in 2050 from the 11 million today.

Trump and his Republican allies are radically redefining what it means to be an American, and we must mobilize to stop them. They are trying to transform our neighbors both at home and across our borders into an insidious enemy. They are trying to poison democracy with hate and fear.

“Democrats have a vision for America that embraces our diversity along with governance that works to improve the lives of everyone,” says Evans. “We will only achieve that vision when people vote for good leadership.”

People have the power. Vote on Nov. 6.

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