

"With respect to the notion that I can just suspend deportations through executive order, that's just not the case, because there are laws on the books that Congress has passed." President Obama, 2011

That was then, this is now.

Recently, President Obama abruptly reversed himself and announced that the Department of Homeland Security would defer removal proceedings and provide work authorization to potentially millions of illegal immigrants who were brought to the United States as children. I think that a large majority of Americans feel a sense of sympathy for children who, through no fault of their own, were brought to the United States illegally but subsequently joined our military or excelled in school while personally abiding by our laws. At the same time, I believe most would agree that our immigration policy must uphold the rule of law and not reward or encourage future illegal immigration.

There is broad bipartisan agreement that our immigration and border security issues must be reformed. But there are strong differences of opinion on how to do that. That is why elected officials engage in debate and negotiation. Unfortunately, the President has decided to bypass the legislative process, and proceed unilaterally by Administrative decree. Not only is this action questionable from a legal and constitutional standpoint, but I believe that the President has unnecessarily made a difficult issue even more difficult. I fear that his action is only going to further inflame the debate and make it more difficult to actually resolve the long-term, multifaceted problem.

Furthermore, this move by the President is yet another example of his Administration's refusal to enforce laws he personally disagrees with. Earlier, the Obama Administration decided to stop defending the Defense of Marriage Act, which passed Congress with bipartisan support and was signed into law by President Clinton, and refused to prosecute members of the Black Panthers for a clear case of voter intimidation during the 2008 elections. Whatever your views on immigration policy or your level of frustration with the pace of Congress, I hope you can understand my concern that this Administration's actions demonstrate a disregard for the lawmaking process and the role of courts as spelled out in our Constitution. There is no imperial presidency in the United States.