

America loses when talented young people are deported

Opinion
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The Aug. 23 story *Former Dade student's deportation saga is familiar* details Fiorella Maza's descent from her normal American life into the hell of deportation and crash landing in what is for her an alien Peruvian environment. If it did nothing but raise awareness of the tragic human consequences of deporting one person, it would have been worth printing. But the story behind the story is even more compelling. We all can see what this young woman lost. Not so apparent is that she is emblematic of what the rest of us have lost as well.

For years, our society has invested in her education and has nourished and developed her talents. What do we benefit by casting her and others in her situation out? Nothing. At a time when America's aged are increasingly taking on a larger share of the national budget and we desperately need talented young people to fill the void, we take a precious resource and throw it away. What sense does that make? The article cited 65,000 as the number of children of undocumented immigrants. Will we throw them all away for the sins of their parents?

These children are ours -- if not by birth then by culture, language, way of thinking, education and love of this country. They are enmeshed in American society, giving and receiving love and support. Why do we choose to focus on the one thing that they could not control -- their parents illegal actions? Why do we choose to emphasize the idea of "taking their place in line" like everyone else?

Fiorella Maza and the others like her should be at the head of the line. They already are part of us and, unlike new immigrants, need not go through the acculturation process, learning English or how to navigate our society. We need to reexamine our priorities and recognize we need these young immigrants as much or more than they need us.

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