

'Alt facts' Promote Fear of Foreigners

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Sunday, 26 March 2017 08:41 -



Don't let baseless fear and lies stand between us and our new neighbors and friends.

HOWARD - These days there are so many "alternative facts" being generated for the sole purpose of making people afraid. Especially troubling to me is the fear of foreigners. The belief that refugees and immigrants are dangerous. Although fears are not new, they are based on misinformation and lies. It's untrue that refugees are not screened before entering the country, and that banning them will keep the U.S. safe from terror. Refugees undergo more rigorous screenings than any other individuals the government allows in the U.S. As a matter of fact, we know that in the past 30 years not a single death in the U.S. has been attributed to people from the countries covered by Trump's unconstitutional executive orders banning Muslims.

It's untrue that immigrants are violent or criminal. In actuality, immigrants commit crimes at lower rates than native-born citizens. Research shows higher levels of immigration may even have contributed to the historic drop in crime rates. It's untrue that immigrants don't want to learn English. Over 50 percent of first-generation immigrants speak English "well" or "very well," and more immigrants want to learn English than classes can accommodate.

It's untrue immigrants and refugees are somehow not like us. They're students in search of an education. They're families trying to make ends meet. They're our neighbors, our friends.

They're Americans.

- Laura Kiefert