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## A Few Simple Truths on Immigration

Donald Trump and his allies at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland peddled two falsehoods about America's immigration problem. One was the vision presented by speaker after speaker of a nation overrun with foreigners crossing American borders and infiltrating communities to rob and kill. Another was the notion that most Americans are desperate for the kind of tough-guy response — including massive deportation and building a wall — that Mr. Trump offers as his solution.

A careful examination of the facts undermines both claims. It is true that this is a complex issue inspiring strong passions. But its resolution, or at least progress toward a resolution, requires clear thinking. It benefits not at all from wild and poisonous assertions. People on all sides of this issue, including Republicans of good will who might be seduced by Mr. Trump's hyperbole, would do well to take a moment or more to reflect on a few simple truths.

One is that the country is divided over immigration, but not nearly as much as Mr. Trump claims. Americans by wide margins have long supported the principles of sensible immigration reform: modernized laws to better match workers and jobs, strong border security (though not the equivalent of a 2,000-mile wall), better workplace standards and wages, and an opportunity for the 11 million immigrants living outside the law to earn inclusion and citizenship.

Recent [polling](#) from the Pew Research Center is instructive: Fifty-nine percent of the public said immigrants “strengthen the country,” while only 33 percent said they were a burden. And 75 percent said immigrants should be allowed to stay legally, if they meet certain

conditions. These principles — recognizing the good that immigrants do for the country and rejecting the folly of high walls and mass expulsion — are the basis of the reform legislation that Mr. Trump so deprecates as “amnesty” and that many Republicans themselves support. As recently as 2013, bipartisan reform [legislation](#) passed the Senate by a vote of 68 to 32.

In Cleveland, Mr. Trump led his party down a path devoid of facts, despite the grieving parents offered up as evidence that all immigrants are killers and despite former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani’s [screams about the end of America](#). The last 20 years of immigration have been matched by big declines in crime, and more than a century of [research](#) shows that immigrants are less prone to crime than native-born Americans.

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Leading Republicans who could rebut these assertions have not done so. Senator John McCain — the author of one of the last big attempts at bipartisan immigration reform — stands with Mr. Trump. Senator Marco Rubio, who is running for re-election, [has a new ad](#) boasting about his courage in blocking refugees from “terrorist countries.”

So it is left to Hillary Clinton to put things right. She has promised to do better on immigration than President Obama, who will leave office having failed to win comprehensive reform, while setting a record for aggressive deportations and persisting in the misguided detention of tens of thousands of Central American refugee mothers and children. Mrs. Clinton has campaigned in defense of immigrant families and workers’ rights, and has promised to take executive actions that expand Mr. Obama’s programs protecting millions of immigrants from deportation.

Mrs. Clinton knows she needs to seize and hold the ground of American values, and it helped that the Democratic convention so proudly celebrated inclusion.

One of its most striking moments came when Khizr Khan, who was born in Pakistan, rebuked Mr. Trump in the name of his son, Humayun, an Army captain who died in Iraq. “Go look at the graves of brave patriots who died defending United States of America,” Mr. Khan said. “You will see all faiths, genders and ethnicities.”

He held out his copy of the Constitution and challenged Mr. Trump to read it.