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Plan Trump Tries to Clarify Immigration Plan, But Avoids Key Issue.

DES MOINES — Donald J. Trump provided on Saturday a more detailed look at his immigration policy, returning to the issue after a week in which he faced criticism from across the political spectrum for seeming to soften his hard-line position on deporting undocumented immigrants.

In a speech at the Iowa State Fairgrounds, Mr. Trump said he would strengthen the system that allows employers to verify the eligibility of workers, and would create an entry-exit tracking system for visas. He also reiterated his promise to cancel “unconstitutional orders” and “executive orders” relating to immigration.

But Mr. Trump largely avoided the question that has caused him trouble this week: what to do about the undocumented immigrants already in the country.

“All the media wants to talk about is the 11 million people, or more, or less — they have no idea what the number is because we have no control over our country, have no idea what it is, that are here illegally,” Mr. Trump said.

His proposals on the employment verification system, known as E-Verify, and on visa tracking, which he said would “ensure those who overstay their visas are quickly removed,” are in line with the approaches put forward by many Republicans, including Jeb Bush and Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey, two of Mr. Trump’s chief rivals in the Republican primary race, and Mitt Romney, the party’s nominee in 2012. They were also central to legislation proposed by a bipartisan group of senators in 2013.

Mr. Trump maintained his hard-line approach to undocumented immigrants who have committed violent crimes, promising that “on Day 1, I am going to begin swiftly removing criminal illegal immigrants from this country.” He said he would always “err on the side of protecting the American people” when it came to removing such immigrants.

Donald Trump Changes Tone on Immigration

Donald J. Trump began his presidential campaign with strong language on immigration policy, especially pertaining to Hispanics and Muslims. With less than three months until the election, his tone has softened.

By SHANE O’NEILL and ALAN RAPPEPORT on Publish Date August 25, 2016. Photo by Damon Winter/The New York Times. Watch in Times Video »

To help illustrate his point, Mr. Trump invited the family of Sarah Root, a young Iowa woman killed by an illegal immigrant in a drunken-driving accident, to give brief remarks.

The comments on Saturday came after Mr. Trump and his campaign faced a backlash from some of his most fervent supporters, who expressed anger and confusion after he told the Fox News host Sean Hannity on Wednesday that he would be open to “softening” on immigration, indicating he might let some undocumented immigrants remain in the country legally, though not as citizens.

“No citizenship,” Mr. Trump said. “They’ll pay back taxes. They have to pay taxes,” he added. “There’s no amnesty, but we will work with them.”

He sought to clear that up on Thursday in an interview with CNN’s Anderson Cooper.

“There’s no path to legalization unless they leave the country,” Mr. Trump said in the interview. “When they come back in, then they can start paying taxes, but there is no path to legalization unless they leave the country and then come back.”

But he still declined to clarify whether he would forcibly deport the undocumented immigrants who have been in the country and not committed a crime, something he had promised during his primary campaign.

Mr. Trump also used the event here, sponsored by Senator Joni Ernst of Iowa, to discuss his agricultural policy. Ms. Ernst, a freshman senator who was considered a possible vice-presidential candidate for Mr. Trump, argued that he would keep the country safe. Senator Charles E. Grassley, the state's senior senator, noted the importance of the Supreme Court vacancy.

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In his remarks, Mr. Trump also brought up the shooting death of a cousin of the N.B.A. star Dwyane Wade, which he had cited earlier in the day on Twitter, as evidence that he was right about the plight of African-Americans.

This time, Mr. Trump's remarks were more tempered, and he offered prayers and condolences rather than saying, as he had earlier: "Just what I have been saying. African-Americans will VOTE TRUMP!"

"Just yesterday, the cousin of N.B.A. star Dwyane Wade — a great guy, Dwyane Wade — was the victim of a tragic shooting in Chicago," Mr. Trump said. "She was the mother of four and was killed while pushing her infant child in a stroller just walking down the street. Shot. It breaks all of our hearts to see it."

He continued: "This shouldn't happen in our country; this shouldn't happen in America. So we send our thoughts and prayers to the family, and we also promise to fight for a much, much better tomorrow."

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