



America gets pushed around on immigration

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How is it that a country as large as the United States gets pushed around so easily on immigration? Despite our tepid economy and dysfunctional political environment, America remains the land where “the streets are paved with gold” for the world’s risk-takers. The US continues to provide generous aid to countries all over the globe. Yet, when it comes to immigration, America walks small with a tiny twig.

In a [news story out](http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/dhs-released-20000-criminal-immigrants-year-39057227) (<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/dhs-released-20000-criminal-immigrants-year-39057227>) yesterday, we learn:

[The] US tried repeatedly to deport Jean Jacques, an immigrant living in the US illegally, but his native Haiti wouldn’t take him back after he served more than a decade in a state prison for attempted murder and committed multiple parole violations.

Each time Jacques was arrested on a parole violation, he would serve a sentence in state prison and then be released to immigration custody. At least three times, Haiti refused to take him back, so Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials in early 2015 did the same thing they do thousands of times a year — they released a violent criminal immigrant from jail.

Six months later, Jacques killed Casey Chadwick, a young Norwich, Connecticut, woman. He was convicted of murder last April and faces sentencing this summer.

Along with Jean the murderer, the US Department of Homeland Security released another 19,700 convicted criminal immigrants in 2015 into American cities. At the same time, the [federal government pushes back on state and local efforts](http://abcnews.go.com/ABC_Univision/News/immigration-enforcement-program-287g-scaled-back/story?id=18077757) (http://abcnews.go.com/ABC_Univision/News/immigration-enforcement-program-287g-scaled-back/story?id=18077757) to control illegal immigration.



(http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/RTX1KKA2_federal-prison-e1463085699209.jpg)

El Reno Federal Correctional Institution outside Oklahoma City July 16, 2015. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque.

Releasing a criminal immigrant back into the streets of America is just plain wrong. The fact that Americans like Casey Chadwick are murdered, injured, or victimized by these criminals is even worse, as every one of these post-release crimes is totally preventable. The federal government should do more to protect its citizens from such people.

As I wrote in [Homeland Security and Federalism](http://www.amazon.com/Homeland-Security-Federalism-Protecting-International/dp/0313355223/ref=asap_bc?ie=UTF8) (http://www.amazon.com/Homeland-Security-Federalism-Protecting-International/dp/0313355223/ref=asap_bc?ie=UTF8) in 2009, “the State Department should get more aggressive with nations who refuse to take back their citizens through such tools as readmission accords and the revocation of visa privileges for embassy staff and their families.” Even more, we should tie US aid to countries over the issue of taking back their citizens. If countries aren’t going to take their citizens back when we ask them to do so, our aid to them should be suspended and, ultimately, terminated. Haiti is [a great example of a country that benefits](https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/us-assistance-haiti-overview-2010-2015-december-2014) (<https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/us-assistance-haiti-overview-2010-2015-december-2014>) enormously from our largesse. It is obnoxious that Haiti can thumb its nose at the US and suffer no consequences.

This get-tough approach may not work with China, but it certainly should with most other countries. It is time the US walked tall and carried a big stick again.

Learn more: [America's federal immigration system fails but one state succeeds](http://www.aei.org/publication/americas-federal-immigration-system-fails-but-one-state-succeeds/) (<http://www.aei.org/publication/americas-federal-immigration-system-fails-but-one-state-succeeds/>)

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