

every day, they take on individual and social responsibility. The president offered more than just freedom; he offered appreciation. They have earned not just recognition as Americans, but our gratitude as well for all that they have contributed through hard work, often at low pay.

They are fine Americans already and, through the lives they have been living as Americans, have earned the documentation that other Americans have gotten just by being born, without earning it. This is a moral narrative that tells a truth and needs to be repeated. But it rarely is.

There are two metaphors, one liberal and one conservative, that do not do the refugees justice. The liberal metaphor is the Path to Citizenship, as if citizenship should be the end of a long, hard journey, with little granted along the way, with long years in limbo, and legal residency only to those who act as ideal citizens and either go to college or serve in the military. The DREAM Act, which would allow such access to the American Dream, doesn't have the right name. It makes these de facto citizens into those who can only dream, as if they are not acting every day just as citizens—the “best” of our citizens—act. At the very least they are earning, and deserve, a minimum along the way: health care, decent housing, decent working conditions, a living wage, and access to education for themselves and their children—and the right to a driver's license. They deserve not just freedom, but gratitude.

The conservative metaphor shows anything but gratitude. It is the Criminal metaphor. In fleeing to America, often risking their lives to come, these refugees trespassed; they did not have documents, which is not within the law. Conservatives have therefore branded them as “criminals”—“illegals”—as if they are committing crimes every day when they are actually mowing lawns, cleaning houses, taking care of children, picking vegetables and fruits, cooking your meals, working on construction sites, and, whenever possible, using all the skills they have to their advantage and to ours. Their children are studying in schools and helping out at home.

But because they often have brown skins, are impoverished, and speak Spanish, they are discriminated against. Conservatives want to jail them and deport them. Being brown-skinned, Spanish-speaking, and poor, and not