Loving an immigrant is beautiful, difficult

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Contributing writer

I am not suggesting that America take in more immigrants than it already does. God bless America and its collective generous heart — it already helps the world in so many ways. Taking my story as a political statement undermines the complexity of love, logic and patriotism. It is possible to love your country more than you love a person, and that is precisely what I feel right now.

I love a man on a visa, but I love my country more. That is why I am not suggesting America burden taxpayers by taking in more immigrants to accommodate my small love story. Immigration policy in this country is bigger than me and my feelings.

Daryl, the object of my affections, is a graduate student at San Jose State. He is studying mechanical engineering. His student visa does not permit him to work here, which is why he is not putting his bachelor’s degree to use. However, many minimum wage jobs are not technically allowed to work in America. Thus, my overqualified friend is currently engineering sandwiches at the Subway near my bus stop, and that is how we met. He made small talk with me while preparing my sandwich. This happened a few times before we exchanged numbers and ended up having more small talk over coffee. We have become friends and I really like him.

Just think about the plight of student visa holders like him. I’m not saying we should change the rules and allow student visa holders to work professionally, but it must be frustrating to work a job that one is over-qualified for. Imagine how desperately these immigrants want to stay in America, to put up with all the struggles that their immigrant status presents. He is working for minimum wage here and yet paying the tuition rate for international students, which is much greater than the tuition rate for natives.

The reason these immigrants are willing to struggle like this is the American Dream. To citizens, the American Dream is owning a house, a car, raising happy children, retiring comfortably. To immigrants, the American Dream is just clean water, safe streets, and a secular government. The comforts of America are greater than those of any other country, and most immigrants realize that it is better to be poor in America than rich anywhere else. I have been to India myself and have seen the difficulties there. No matter how fond we are of complaining about the government or any other problems in America, we must concede that there is nowhere else we would rather be.

Back in the day, when my father first came from India, he got his green card within a year of coming here on a work visa. At the time, almost every student visa holder could bet on earning a work visa soon enough and then getting a green card. However, times have really changed.

Hundreds of thousands of students come from India every year and there is no meaningful limit to how many student visas are given. Anyone and everyone is welcome to study here in America. All you need is ambition, intelligence, hard work and a fat wallet.

But America couldn’t possibly give work visas to every student here from India, so there is a lottery system for it. 60,000 temporary work visas will be granted to Indians every year, and an additional 20,000 will be granted to student visa holders who are already here. My friend has until the end of next semester, when he finishes his master’s degree, to get a work visa. If it does not come through, he is considering starting on a doctoral program or trying his luck at a riparian corridor and an area of cultural significance to the Ohlone People. Disrupting this area will impact several wildlife habitats and native species. Bulldozing and paving parklands for a parking lot is not the solution.

The Park District has a slogan: “Healthy Parks/Healthy People.” Mission Peak Regional Preserve — Stanford staging is not a “healthy” park.

Save Mission Peak. Please do not build a parking lot. Reconsider other alternatives that provide more effective solutions, with less negative environmental impact and less cost to taxpayers.

Tony Pang
Fremont Resident

‘Paving parklands for a parking lot is not the solution’

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the preserve can sustain to ensure its long-term viability for the future, and avoid irreparable damage. Nature has its limits.

The park district needs to reconsider options dismissed in the draft report that if implemented in combination would provide effective solutions with less negative environmental impacts and less cost to taxpayers.

A hiker/permit reservation system should be considered to balance visitor demand and park preservation.

Mission Peak — Stanford is a Regional Preserve, classified as a Resource Conservation Open Space area. It is a riparian corridor and an area of cultural significance to the Ohlone People. Disrupting this area will impact several wildlife habitats and native species. Bulldozing and paving parklands for a parking lot is not the solution.

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