



Letter
to the
Editor

Attacks on Birthright Citizenship Part of an Effort To Redefine Who Gets To Be American

From John C. Yang, Esq.

Nolan Rappaport's opinion piece ("Why does the US have birthright citizenship? Should it?," July 8, 2025) attempts to cast doubt on the constitutionality of birthright citizenship for all children born in the U.S. and ignores the heart of this issue: The administration's birthright executive order is just one piece of a coordinated attack on everyone born here, not just immigrant communities. This is not the first time that the president has flouted the U.S. Constitution and rule of law, but the idea that any president believes he can dictate who is and is not an American is not only wrong, it is dangerous.

The fight to deem who is "worthy" of citizenship is as old as our nation and part of a long history of racism and exclusion. This included the Naturalization Act of 1790, which allowed only immigrants who were "free white persons" to become citizens, and the 1857 Supreme Court decision that denied citizenship to people of African descent.

If we are to believe in American exceptionalism, then we should believe that an America that fosters, nurtures and invites immigrant communities to thrive is exceptional. And if *jus soli* or "right of the soil" is an exception, as Rappaport suggests, I support America being exceptional.

Furthermore, the 1898 Supreme Court removed any doubt through its ruling in *U.S. v. Wong Kim Ark*, when it recognized the 14th Amendment established birthright citizenship for any person born on U.S. soil, with very limited exceptions. It recognized that the amendment applies without regard to the immigration status of a person's parents. The Constitution applies to everyone; it does not stop applying to some after an arbitrary point in time based on the stroke of the president's pen.

Most Americans oppose limiting or ending the Fourteenth Amendment. Americans also overwhelmingly support pathways to citizenship over mass deportations. Rappaport's arguments are at odds with Americans' core values: equality under the law, protecting those with less power and keeping families together.

The president attempting to end birthright citizenship by fiat is yet another attempt to discriminate by rewriting what it means to be an American — something that should concern all of us.

— Washington, D.C.

The US Needs a Foothold in the Increasingly Dangerous Sahel. Togo Is Here To Help.

As extremism and terrorism roil West Africa, Togo offers the type of partnership that can promote regional stability without requiring more U.S. boots on the ground.

Contributed by Robert Dussey

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As Congress prepares to mark up the fiscal 2026 National Defense Authorization Act, the U.S. has a critical opportunity to strengthen its strategic partnerships in Africa — partnerships that will shape regional stability for years to come. Nowhere is this more urgent than in West Africa.

Gen. Michael Langley, commander of U.S. Africa Command (Africom), warned in May that terrorist groups are actively seeking access to the West African coastline — an effort that "puts not just African nations at risk, but also increases the chance of threats reaching the U.S. shores." Terrorist attacks in northern Togo, once unthinkable, are now tragically real. To counter extremism and support governance, the U.S. must act with urgency and with trusted partners.

It must act with Togo.

Togo is the United States' most engaged and capable defense partner in coastal West Africa. Over the past decade, Togo and the United States have built a strong foundation of security cooperation — from joint training and intelligence sharing to patrols and counterterrorism efforts. Togo's armed forces regularly participate in U.S.-led exercises like Flintlock, which strengthens special operations and counterterror capabilities across the Sahel, and Obangame Express, which enhances maritime security coordination in the Gulf of Guinea.

These efforts do more than build capacity and interoperability — they forge real operational trust.

At home, Togo has prioritized national security by increasing its defense budget from 8.7 percent of government spending in 2017 to 17.5 percent in 2022, aiming to modernize our military and enhancing readiness. These efforts have made our relationship a model of partnership and a cornerstone of regional stability.

As U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Kenneth Ekman, director of the Africom Coordination Element, emphasized last year, "The partnership between AFRICOM and the Togolese military is essential in promoting peace and security across the West African region. By strengthening this relationship, we not only enhance Togo's defense capabilities but also ensure a united and effective approach to

addressing the complex security challenges we face together."

This partnership aligns with the Trump administration's shift toward a leaner U.S. defense footprint in Africa, built around empowering reliable regional partners to address transnational threats. Togo has embraced this, stepping up its operational capabilities and committing to greater regional responsibility.

As Gen. Langley told the House Armed Services Committee, "Strengthening the capacity of African partners to address security challenges and enhance regional stability reduces the long-term need for U.S. security assistance."

Togo is demonstrating exactly that model of sustainable, partner-led security cooperation.

While U.S. law restricts certain forms of direct assistance to Sahelian countries including Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, information sharing remains both legal and vital. And Section 7008's restrictions do not apply to partners such as Togo, nor do they prevent the U.S. from sharing actionable intelligence with Togo, which can in turn relay threat information to front-line states across the Sahel.

The threat posed by terrorist networks in the Sahel cannot be overstated. According to the 2025 Global Terrorism Index, the region now accounts for more than half of terrorism-related deaths worldwide. Lethal and organized groups such as al Qaeda affiliate Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal-Muslimin and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara continue to exploit porous borders, local grievances, and weak governance to expand their reach.

These extremist networks are no longer confined to the Sahel's core — they are steadily advancing southward into Togo, Ghana, Benin, and Côte d'Ivoire, where they are actively seeking access to ports and transit corridors to support smuggling, arms trafficking, and illicit finance.

The implications for regional security — and for international partners with strategic interests in West Africa — are profound. Regional security is a prerequisite for economic growth and trade across Africa. The Gulf of Guinea, including Togo's Port of Lomé — the deepest water port on the West African coast — is a lifeline for inland economies and a vital logistics hub for landlocked countries in the Sahel, a corridor that would be threatened with heightened terrorist activity.

The U.S. cannot afford to retreat from the Sahel. Nor should it allow extremist groups to expand their influence unchecked. By strengthening cooperation with capable, willing partners such as Togo, and by leveraging Togo as a hub for regional intelligence coordination, the U.S. can regain strategic momentum and help stem the tide of extremist and criminal networks.

The road ahead will be difficult. But with the right tools, partners, and political will, we can contain this crisis before it escalates further.

Unchecked, these networks will expand, radicalize, and export violence far beyond Africa's borders. Togo stands ready to confront this threat alongside the U.S. — not only to defend peace, but to secure prosperity across the continent.

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