

Time to stop overgeneralizing about immigrants

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IPC's senior policy analyst Michele Waslin was quoted in a Washington Post article about the complexity of immigration law and the dangers of overgeneralizing:

"The confusion with the military aspect has been troubling these last couple of weeks because so many people get it wrong. It really shows the need for education on how immigration rules really work," said Michele Waslin, the senior policy analyst at the Washington, D.C.-based Immigration Policy Center. "Immigration law is really, really complex and people think you're either legal or you're not, even though there are lots of different types of statuses."

Waslin listed for me a long list of temporary and permanent forms of being in the country legally and illegally, which sometimes overlap or morph from one to the other; everything from being in the country on work, study and vacation visas, to being in different stages of applying for a green card. Plus there are temporary protected statuses that can change on a moment's notice and various legal-limbo modes, such as the recently re-announced "deferred action" that confers a status that's neither legal nor illegal.

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