

Miami Herald

As Supreme Court mulls DREAMers' fate, Trump, Congress can prevent their deportation | Opinion

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November 11, 2019

At the age of 12, I arrived in the United States with my family after we lost everything following the Cuban Revolution. My parents sought not only a haven in this country, but also a brighter future for their children.

I was able to pursue opportunities only possible in this country. Thanks to my parents' decision to upend their lives in pursuit of a better life for me and my siblings, I became the person I am today: a veteran, businessman, philanthropist and proud American.

I see my own story reflected in the lives of many young people I have had the privilege of working with over the years, which led me to fund the IMPAC Fund and co-chair the American Business Immigration Coalition. One such young person, Mariana Castro, came to the United States when she was 10, brought by her mother from Peru. They left her father and brothers behind.

While her mother worked three jobs to keep food on the table, Mariana excelled as a Central Florida high school student. She was awarded the state's highest scholarship to the University of Florida, where she earned a degree in biology. During her college career, she interned for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and was hired as a legislative aide in the Florida Senate. Over the years, she received several awards for her advocacy in the immigrant community, including being named the only female "Outstanding Student Leader" in her graduating class.

Despite her achievements and contributions to her community, however, Mariana and her family were not welcomed into this nation with open arms like my family was. She is a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipient. As such, she faces the imminent risk that the program protecting her from deportation will be terminated; and because there is no pathway to citizenship or other options to remain in the United States legally, she faces an uncertain future. She may be forced to leave the only home she has known for most of her life.

On Nov. 12, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments to review the Trump administration's decision to terminate the DACA program. If the Court rules in favor of the administration, almost 700,000 young people like Mariana who have grown up, gone to school and built families and careers in our nation could face deportation. This number does not include the millions of other young undocumented members of our society, known as DREAMers, who were unable to benefit from DACA because were too young to apply or did not have the financial resources to pay for the application before the program was rescinded. These are people who, like myself, came to this country as children, their families fleeing persecution and looking

for a better life. But who instead of being welcomed they have been villainized and used as political bargaining chips.

We know the economic benefits of keeping DREAMers in the United States. According to a study conducted by the CATO Institute, a conservative think tank , the U.S. Treasury will take in \$92 billion in the next 10 years if DREAMers are permitted to stay here, work and pay taxes.

With 97 percent of DACA recipients currently employed or in school, losing them would destroy our communities and devastate our economy, with an anticipated loss of \$460.3 billion in GDP over the next decade if they were no longer able to participate in our workforce. In Florida alone, DREAMers have a cumulative spending power of \$1.3 billion and contribute almost \$115 million in state and local taxes each year.

But DREAMers are more than a dollar sign — they are our neighbors, classmates, colleagues, teachers. And since 20 years is the average amount of time they have been in this country, they are American to the core. Providing DREAMers with a pathway to citizenship not only is morally right; it is also an investment in our future.

The federal government has been playing with DREAMers' lives for too long. With the overwhelming majority of Americans supportive of DREAMers remaining in our country and giving them a pathway to citizenship, President Trump and Congress need to come to the table to do what they were elected to do and find a permanent legislative solution for these young people and their families.