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Commentary: Immigrants help America thrive. My story proves that.

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I am grateful to the United States of America. This country afforded me the opportunity to have a vision and realize it — perhaps beyond my original imagination.

Since I was granted a U.S. visa nearly 30 years ago I have obtained an MBA from Lehigh University and gone on to found Vistex, a Hoffman Estates-based \$200 million tech company that serves industry behemoths like Apple, Amazon, Walmart, 3M, Adobe and General Motors.

I try my best to pay it forward: This month, I donated \$5 million to my alma mater for the development of the Vistex Institute, a hub for executive research and learning.

I share this not to brag, but to prove a simple point: Skills-based immigration is a valuable asset to the continued growth of our nation's economy. Since my first day in the U.S., I've committed to not only improving the quality of life for myself and my family, but to being a highly productive member of our society and economy. It's something I feel the urge to speak passionately about because as a nation, we are now in the midst of a fierce debate on immigration, specifically when it comes to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

As a leader in the tech industry who sees the benefits of attracting and retaining skilled labor, regardless of origin or status, I support DACA, and I'm not alone in my criticism of the policy's potential repeal. Silicon Valley heavy hitters like Facebook, Apple and Google, as well as Microsoft, have voiced their support for allowing our nation's undocumented youths to remain and continue contributing to our society and economy.

The young people benefiting from this policy are positive contributors to the economy, not just in tech, but everywhere. They embrace the values and ethos of life in the U.S. On an economic level, I'd view the policy rescission as counterproductive at best to an organization like mine.

I'm not basing this opinion on anecdotal evidence or my gut reaction as an immigrant (I was admittedly flabbergasted when I heard the news of a potential rollback). As someone who has built a career on software and data, I place my faith in numbers, and, in this case, the numbers are astounding. For example, 91 percent of DACA beneficiaries are employed, 65 percent have purchased a vehicle, 16 percent have purchased a home, and 5 percent have started their own business, according to a study by the Center for American Progress and FWD.us.

These people, I believe, are benefiting our society as a whole, contributing to our gross domestic product by purchasing goods, paying taxes, contributing growth and providing more employment opportunities. This is not an example of "They're coming for our jobs." In many cases, they've created jobs. Not to mention, the cost of dismantling this policy would be a burden to the

American people. Ending DACA would reduce economic growth by \$280 billion over the next 10 years and cost employers \$2 billion over the next two years, according to the libertarian Cato Institute. Business will always find a way to move on, but limiting access to our resource pool would significantly dampen our growth.

Regardless of what path the current administration pursues, I'm optimistic about the opportunities afforded to global talent by technology. Yes, there's always the dream of coming to America, but talent knows no boundaries and in an interconnected world it's possible to leverage that talent remotely from anywhere in the world (although that seems like it would go against the administration's goals even more than just bringing talent to U.S. soil).

The Norman Rockwell-esque American dream of apple pie and picket fences has evolved. The new American Dream is heterogenous, complex and multifaceted, full of various cultures coming and carving out a space for themselves and thriving in our collective economy — benefiting themselves and all Americans. I'm living proof that this American Dream is attainable.