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'Dreamers' took a big risk'; their trust may lead to deportation

Vivek Wadhwa

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About 800,000 immigrant children could lose their jobs and be rounded up by police and deported to countries where their lives are at risk - and which are foreign to them - if the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program is allowed to lapse.

Attorneys general from 10 states have challenged DACA, which allows young, unauthorized immigrants, known as “dreamers,” to live and work legally in the United States without fear of deportation. They plan to sue the Trump administration if it doesn’t begin rolling back the program by Sept. 5.

Given that in 2016 Texas successfully challenged an effort by President Barack Obama to expand DACA, such a lawsuit might succeed.

And the chances that Attorney General Jeff Sessions will defend DACA are slim, given that in July he maintained his position that the Department of Justice would have no objection to abandoning DACA “because it is very questionable, in my opinion, constitutionally.”

These children took a big risk by registering with the government to be covered under DACA. Now, this trust in the American government may lead to their deportation if the Trump administration doesn’t act to save the program.

In 2012, Obama launched DACA to allow children of undocumented parents to work without punishment. The parents of these children brought them here to give them better lives, and the children didn’t knowingly break any laws. These Dreamers grew up as Americans, believing they were entitled to the same rights and freedoms as their friends were. Yet, when they became old enough to work or go to college, they learned that there are limits on where they can study and what they can do. They had to live as second-class citizens in the shadows of society.

So DACA allowed them to come out of those shadows by giving them a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and eligibility for a work permit if they passed a rigorous background check. The plan was to follow this up with comprehensive immigration reform - a full legalization of status.

President Donald Trump has on several occasions expressed compassion for these children. He said at a news conference in February: “We’re going to show great heart. DACA is a very, very difficult subject for me, I will tell you. To me, it’s one of the most difficult subjects I have because you have these incredible kids.” He refrained from doing what he promised during the

election campaign: to deport these children. But the administration, which is still deciding the program's fate, has yet to make a decision on deportation.

From what I've been reading, there is the possibility that Trump will do nothing, letting the attorneys general take the heat for the humanitarian crisis that is likely to ensue if Sessions has his way and the program is allowed to lapse.

David Bier of the CATO Institute estimates that with DACA rescission, 110,653 permits will expire in 2017; 404,909 in 2018; and the remainder in 2019. That would mean that these children would be subject to deportation at the whim of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents.

By playing with the lives of immigrant children, we are hurting the soul of America itself again.