



Keep DACA, and keep the kids

Darrell Rodriguez

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As an educator, I wholeheartedly oppose the Trump Administration's decision to end the DACA program on behalf of all the undocumented kids that I taught to dream big and reach for the stars. Dreamers need a path to citizenship. This country is their home. Their dream is American, and just like their citizen peers who sat in desks next to them, they deserve life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Trump's back and forth flip-flopping position leaves Dreamers wondering, "what fate does our future hold?"

Children do not choose to become undocumented immigrants. The decisions made by their parents to bring them to the United States without legal documentation should not be held against them.

Last year, I was a middle school science teacher, but, like teachers everywhere thanks to Trump, I also served as a crisis counselor. The day after Trump was elected, students bombarded me with questions. They wanted to know what would happen to them and their families. With constant media coverage of a huge border wall and mass deportation forces, the students turned to their educators out of fear. They wanted answers. I tried to reassure them, but my heart broke for them.

I worked at one of the most diverse middle schools in Dallas ISD. We had students who hailed from all over the world. A large percentage were immigrants. I wanted their minds to be preoccupied with subatomic particles and chemical formulas, not fearing their families would be torn apart. It was a struggle to address these issues and maintain neutrality. It was not my place to impart my personal politics onto them, even though I disagreed with Trump's rhetoric, and despised his narcissistic, bullying personality.

Educators teach every student who walks into their classroom without any regard to documentation. It's not only the moral thing to do, it's also the law. In June of 1982, the United States Supreme Court made a landmark ruling in the Plyler vs. Doe case that mandated that states could not deny students a free public education because of their immigration status. Every child is granted the right to a free public education. Undocumented students are taught alongside citizen students as peers. We teach them that they can do anything in life if they work hard. We set them up for success. These undocumented students who go on to graduate become our Dreamers.

Many of these undocumented students dreamed their way into full scholarships to Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, and Yale. Many of them dreamed their way through medical school and law school, and after years of congress failing to act, we had a true leader step forward. With a message of hope and change, President Barack Obama enacted the DACA program. Finally, the innocent Dreamers who were made to feel alien in their own country came out of the shadows. They were able to get jobs, buy houses, and create new business ventures. It turns out that their dream all along was the American Dream.

The millions of dollars spent educating these kids finally started paying off as DACA recipients were able to work legally, pay taxes, and invest. The decision to end the DACA program by the most incompetent, fear-mongering, radical president in modern history – one hell-bent on making America hate again – has left the futures of Dreamers uncertain. What is certain is how much the decision will cost. According to [a January 2017 study](#) by the CATO Institute, the cost of repealing DACA could cost the US economy hundreds of billions of dollars.

The DACA program allowed children, neighbors, and even my friends to finally realize their dreams. Trump stomped on their small chance at peace and security. He turned dreams into nightmares. Approximately 800,000 American-educated young adults are now living in fear of possible deportation with no guarantee for the future of their jobs and families? How many more children are we going to educate only to send them away?

Taxes are not the only thing invested into the education of Dreamers. Educators invest in them too. We spend more time with undocumented students and their peers than their parents, and as a natural consequence, we love them as if they were our own. We lose sleep over them. We open our pocketbooks and spend our own money on them for supplies. We want the best for them. We want them to succeed. We even call them “our kids.”

And who doesn't want what's best for their kids?