



LUCIA BERMUDEZ

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR. Co-Editor-in-Chief Lucia Bermudez comments on the significance of DACA and what should follow its rescinding.

A mother walks for miles, her body aching, her mind racing and her baby on her chest, all while she wonders what possibilities could lie ahead for her and her family.

The country on the other side of the imaginary border line provides promise and hope, hope that her baby will grow up in a place that may be better than their home, a place where she can grow up to have a prosperous life and become what she dreams of -- live the American Dream. But when that baby grows up, she soon discovers the place she was raised doesn't really want her to dream.

It doesn't even want her there at all.

The life of an undocumented immigrant in America is not an easy one. Many individuals wake up every day in fear, often living amongst the shadows, avoiding anyone or anything that could bring attention to them and their identity.

The burden of a life filled with uncertainty and fear often weighs especially heavy on the young people who were brought to America as children, but an executive order passed in 2012 alleviated some of that stress, giving a new hope to young people across the nation.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), an immigration policy established by the Obama administration in June 2012, allowed certain undocumented individuals who are under 31 years of age and came to America before the age of 16 a work permit, a driver's license and temporary relief from deportation.

DACA gave these approximately 800,000 young people, often referred to as "Dreamers", a chance to live as productive members of society without constant fear.

However, all 800,000 Dreamers are now at risk of deportation as of Sept. 5, when the Trump administration announced -- through Attorney General Jeff Sessions -- the decision to rescind DACA. Though President Donald Trump gave Congress a window to pass a law allowing Dreamers to stay and possibly seek citizenship, the loss of this program is devastating for Dreamers and their

families.

DACA provides Dreamers with security. It's not a free pass into the country or an unfair means of letting immigrants "freeload" in America. DACA is a way of not holding children responsible for their parents actions.

Many Dreamers are in the U.S. because their parents wanted a better life for them. As children, it wasn't their choice to come, and DACA is a way of giving young people have temporary relief and allowing them to live a somewhat normal life.

Though DACA is a good start to making the "American Dream" more accessible, it isn't enough.

DACA is not and was never meant to be a path to citizenship. It was established because there is no path to citizenship for Dreamers who were brought to America as children. What Dreamers need is an efficient path to citizenship -- one that is clear, straightforward and accessible. An example of such a law would be the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act.

The act, first introduced in 2001 to the Senate by Illinois Democratic Senator Dick Durbin and Utah Republican Senator Orrin Hatch, has gone through several waves of introduction and rejection, but was reintroduced this year by South Carolina Republican Senator Lindsey Graham and Durbin.

According to CNN on Sept. 14, the act would "grant a conditional green card to all current DACA recipients and create a system for similar young undocumented immigrants brought to America as children to also obtain conditional green cards." Eventually, if the requirements of the bill are met, among other qualifications necessary, those individuals could apply for permanent residency and potentially citizenship.

The DREAM Act has been met with opposition, but it is a realistic and viable option, and one that could have a major impact on the lives of Dreamers.

DACA may be gone, but Dreamers are not, and it's time to fight for those who want nothing more than to live out their own American Dream.



Right: DREAMERS IN ACTION: Protests have broken out across the nation against the rescinding of DACA. The executive order introduced by the Obama administration granted undocumented people brought to the U.S. under the age of 16 work permits, a drivers license and protection from deportation.



Photo illustration by Suncera Pavia