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Plight of the Dreamers

Situation

Approximately 850,000 **Americans** are in danger of deportation. These are the grown children brought here by illegal immigrants while quite young. The USA is the only home they have ever known, and most contribute positively to society. Following is a brief summary of the plight of the Dreamers.

2010

In 2010, attempting to fix the problem for this specific demographic, the US Senate and Congress debated the Dream Act, to provide a legal path to citizenship. The rules: applicants must have lived in the United States for five or more years, earned a high school diploma or equivalent, attended college, or served in the military. In the Senate, bipartisan votes killed the Dream Act, leaving the Dreamers in treacherous territory and in danger of deportation.

Root Cause

The root cause of the status fiasco was a commitment made in 2008 by candidate Barack Obama to the Latino community. He promised a comprehensive immigration bill providing a pathway to citizenship. The Latino vote was 67 percent for Obama. In his first term, given a Democratic majority in both houses, comprehensive legislation was a near guarantee, but the President reneged on his promise.

Running for reelection in 2012, faced with the potential loss of Latino voters, President Obama issued a directive, not technically an executive order, through the Secretary of Home Land Security, Janet Napolitano. She issued the "Dream Act," the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Technically, it was a directive to ignore current laws, not alternate legislation. It served the same purpose, providing

a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation, eligibility for a work permit, and an implicit future pathway to citizenship. Presidents cannot make law, resulting in immediate court challenges. (Executive orders or directives by one president do not bind the actions of the next one).

The strategy worked. In 2012, the Latino community cast nine percent of all votes, 71 percent for President Obama. Perhaps done for the wrong reasons, DACA addressed real issues for people with lives in limbo.

Compounding the problem, the administration opened the door to children from Mexico, Central America, South America, and island countries. Many of these immigrants believed that citizenship with all the benefits was automatic. This action infuriated the Republican legislators and some Democrats, adding to the opposition for the Dreamers.

A legal battle challenged DACA, and a Federal court prevented its implementation. Following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia, with only eight members on the Supreme Court, a tie vote on the appeal kept the stay in effect.

Current

For his part, President Trump compassionately chose not to rescind the executive order. The Department of Homeland Security continues to protect the Dreamers from deportation, providing work permits and access to legal employment, but those who commit crimes face deportation.

The Supreme Court now has full membership, and litigants are bringing extreme pressure to void DACA. President Trump must decide if the Federal government has a winnable case before fighting for the program. Voiding the directive would jeopardize the dreamers who signed up for DACA. Apprehension and fear again grip the Dreamers, human pawns in a perpetual political game.

This is not an issue for the President or the courts to resolve. They enforce the law. The Senate and Congress are responsible to make law and need to fix the problem.

The Dreamers deserve a welcome to **THEIR OWN HOMES**, right here in **America**, a country with a big heart and one blessed by God. They are members of our military, graduates from our schools, and for the most part, excellent citizens, and neighbors. They are **AMERICANS**, and many are patriots.

I am an avid proponent of the rule of law, but **JUSTICE** is a higher value.



Best regards,

Wayne L Staley

Affinity Systems LLC

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