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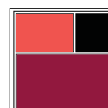
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DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY

Over Twenty Five Years of Service to America's Diverse Communities

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH



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Guerrero: Congress must pass the DREAM Act to ensure that Dreamers are not separated from their families, as I was when my parents and brother were deported.

In search of heroes in Congress

By Diane Guerrero

I grew up in Boston, where I was surrounded by the richness of American history. On its cobblestoned streets stand monuments and historic structures that tell stories of leaders who had the courage to defend freedom as they founded our nation. They are our heroes.

Today, we are desperately in need of new political heroes.

We have a president who preaches the "rule of law" but pardons former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Arizona, who was voted out of office and then convicted in federal court related to charges of violating the U.S. Constitution by racially profiling Latinos like me.

Next, President Trump performed perhaps the cruelest act I have ever seen committed by an American president by ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which included almost 800,000 participants. Unless Congress stops him, Trump and the anti-immigrant politicians and base he represents will be ending the American lives of young adults who are contributing to our country.

It is up to all of us to stop this political madness. We need to dedicate ourselves, especially during Hispanic Heritage Month, to rising up and demanding an end to cruelty to show that we deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

For years, the so-called Dreamers have been my heroes. When I was afraid to speak out on behalf of immigrants' rights — for my parents, in particular — they gave me courage. I saw their growing political strength through public protests that put them at risk of deportation, and I thought: They are undocumented and unafraid. I am a U.S. citizen,

and I must no longer be afraid.

As the citizen daughter of Colombian immigrants, our family lived the double life of embracing our American existence in Boston while hiding the fact that my parents and older brother did not have legal status. After failed attempts to rectify their status, my father used what little savings he had to make monthly payments to a lawyer who was helping us — but the lawyer scammed us. I will never forget going with my father to visit the attorney, only to find an empty office and the nameplate gone, along with our money. It was heartbreaking and, unfortunately, all too common.

During my freshman year in high school, my family was deported. When politicians talk about immigration, they focus on the politics more than the affected families. I assure you, the impact is great. The family unit comes to an end when it is separated, and the financial, emotional and scholastic lives of children are shaken.

As my acting career took off, I avoided interviews out of fear of being asked about my family background in the midst of the hateful political climate. With inspiration from Dreamers, I found my voice on behalf of immigrants' rights and Latino civic engagement.

When it comes to Congress, I do not pretend to be an expert. But here is what I know.

First, destroying the lives of DACA recipients is 800,000 times what happened to me but worse. My family was torn apart because of Congress's failures to update the immigration system in a just and fair way. Not the Trump way of building border walls, funding a massive deportation force and reducing the legal visas, but in a way that speaks to the reality

It is up to all of us to stop this political madness. We need to dedicate ourselves, especially during Hispanic Heritage Month, to rising up and demanding an end to cruelty to show that we deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

of our diverse nation that benefits greatly from the presence of immigrants. Ending DACA would cost us \$460.3 billion in lost economic growth over the next decade.

Second, I am a voter — and an outspoken one — and like all voters, I want Congress to do its job. The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act needs to be passed by the House and Senate now. Not next month, and certainly not next year. Voters, including the overwhelming majority who do not want Dreamers deported, are tired of childish threats about government shutdowns and reading tweets divorced from reality.

Pass the DREAM Act on its own, without any additional baggage like a border wall that will be an ugly monument to Trump's anti-immigrant legacy. Pass the DREAM Act with the urgency you are applying to fund hurricane recovery and relief. Remember that hurricanes are acts of God, but ending DACA is a political disaster that only Congress can fix.

Third, we are watching. During Hispanic Heritage Month, I will be part of a campaign called RISE: Register to vote. Ignite community involvement. Strive to grow our political power. Engage by becoming citizens and mobilizing others to get involved. We are ready to hold you accountable, now and next year, when you stand for reelection.

This is your chance to rise with us and show that you are on our side, the side that seeks morally right legislative solutions. Show that you have the courage exemplified by our founding fathers.

Diane Guerrero is an actor and author of her memoir, "In The Country We Love," and partners with Immigrant Legal Resource Center, Mi Familia Vota and New American Leaders Project.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

This Hispanic Heritage Month, let's reflect on the rich history, contributions of Latino Americans

By Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Calif.)

My parents instilled in me early the value of hard work and dedication to the job at hand. They left their home in Guanajuato, Mexico, behind, and immigrated to the United States to provide a better life and greater opportunity for their family.

Today, I am proud to be among the 55 million Latinos living in America; part of a large and vibrant diaspora that has strengthened this nation through strong work ethic, entrepreneurship and service in their individual communities.

During Hispanic Heritage Month, we celebrate the contribution of Latinos in America. From political leaders Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, who fought to strengthen our labor laws for farmworkers, like my father, to public servants including Sonya Sotomayer and her historic appointment to the Supreme Court, Latinos have had a profound positive impact on our country.

While this month is meant to celebrate our unique heritage and contributions to the American mosaic, the Latino community is under threat, as President Trump announced he is ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. This program has given nearly 800,000 young men and women, who

came here as children, a shot at the American dream, allowing them to live, work and learn in the United States legally and without fear of deportation.

I share a similar story as many of these "Dreamers." I immigrated to the United States with my parents as a five-year-old boy. This country has since given me the opportunity to work hard, raise my two children and serve my country in local government, our military and in Congress. Terminating DACA and stripping Dreamers of that same hope and opportunity is unconscionable and incompatible with our American values.

Congress must now act and pass the DREAM Act, which would provide a permanent legislative solution that allows Dreamers to remain in the U.S. and contribute to our nation's future. They are our neighbors, our children's classmates and our friends. Dreamers are hard-working and law-abiding people who put their trust in the American government — we cannot turn our backs on them.

From the misguided and wasteful proposition that a southern border wall will solve our immigration problems to the stunning pardoning of Sheriff Joe Arpaio, this president has shown his willingness to condone xenophobic and discriminatory actions toward Latinos.

To date, President Trump has not

Terminating DACA and stripping Dreamers of that same hope and opportunity is unconscionable and incompatible with our American values.

sought to improve our badly broken immigration process or aid immigrant communities, but rather has made life in the United States more difficult for immigrant families.

When I came to this country with my family, it was through a system that worked. Congress has not made any adjustments to our broken immigration system in 30 years; it is clearly in need of repair. We need a comprehensive,

long-term immigration solution to boost our economy, reduce our deficit and help our country move forward.

My district on the central coast of California is home to a large Latino population that is engaged in helping our neighborhoods prosper. I am proud to represent and partner with our diverse district, to fight divisive executive action and legislation that does not work toward productive compromise.

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month could not have come at a more opportune time in our political climate. As we take this time to recognize the rich culture, history and contributions of Latino Americans, I hope we also pay attention to the difficulties facing our community. This Hispanic Heritage Month, we must all unite and redouble our resolve to resist efforts to alienate, marginalize and criminalize the Latino community.

I am a proud American and proud of my Latino heritage. My life experience has made me a more compassionate and informed public servant. I look forward to working with my colleagues in both parties to promote legislation that builds on the progress we have made in embracing diversity and expanding opportunity for all our country.

Carbajal represents California's 24th District.



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HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH



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Andrade: President Trump's policies benefit all Americans who are willing to work hard, and that includes the Hispanic community.

Hispanics are poised to benefit from policies by the Trump administration

By JuanPablo Andrade

Hispanic Heritage Month is important to me. As it should be important to all Americans. As important as Black History Month is, and Jewish American Heritage Month is, and all other months dedicated to those who have not only made the United States their home, but have also moved here to make powerful impacts, to contribute to their communities, and to positively influence and enrich our nation and societies.

As the Hispanic community has made its positive strides in the past, and currently as well — as Americans we should only expect many more positive impacts from this community. Being a Hispanic myself, I know how hard-working and dedicated this community is. But quite frankly, it breaks my heart to see and hear of them being distraught and worried about President Trump and his administration. Many believe this community to be completely opposite from President Trump and that they are completely against him.

But the reality, a fact that many don't understand, is that Hispanics both here and in their home countries believe in many of the ideas and policies of our president. They believe in immigration reform, they want more jobs, they respect law enforcement and their responsibilities.

But you know who I blame? The mainstream media and Democratic obstructionists, who would rather see this community scared and worried than working alongside President Trump

to help it prosper. Since day one, these groups have been feeding messages of hate, racism and adversity to the Hispanic community, motivating them to be against our president.

President Trump has been communicating and working with all communities, especially the Hispanic community, to relay his plan. They include messages of hope, growth and commitment to bettering the country for all citizens where they live, and for those who want to live here.

Immigration is a topic always brought up when speaking about Hispanics. The media seems to not understand that there are other important issues that pertain to the Hispanic community, but immigration reform is the hot topic that the media likes to pin against President Trump, whom they deem "completely against Latinos."

That isn't true. The president has said time and time again that he loves Hispanics. He stands with them. He understands that many Hispanics have made positive contributions to the United States.

He wants Hispanics to want to come to the United States, to want to start new lives here, work here and contribute, but on a legal basis, as everyone should.

This doesn't mean anti-Hispanic, or anti-immigration. What this means is most certainly pro-immigration, but pro-legal immigration, and that is something that goes for those from every other country in the world, not just those from Latin America.

When speaking about jobs, President Trump has stated that he would be one of the greatest jobs presidents that this

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country will have, and so far, he has been just that. Since his inauguration, unemployment rates have fallen and will continue to fall. There have been well over 1 million new hires all across this country, and those are for everyone, including Hispanics. They are opened to the same opportunities as any other American born here, or anyone who immigrated here. But the one thing he has been asking everyone is to work hard. That's a given.

The United States is the greatest country in the history of the world — it only makes sense to have the best of the best people living here, regardless of where they are from. One of the largest problems the media has is that they are very prejudiced in their own way. They tend to relate certain issues, like immigration and deportations, to Hispanics. But another reality check from them is that all

issues that pertain to Hispanics, blacks, Asians and Muslims living here, issues that pertain to you and your community, pertain to everyone in our country.

President Trump is helping no community more than the other. He sees all as equals. Equal to all of the same opportunities, equal in rights, and equal potential to prosper how they want.

As it is Hispanic Heritage Month, again, we celebrate those who have made positive and productive impacts in our lives, so we should only expect more greatness. Just another example of what makes America great. And I believe that President Trump is helping with that.

Andrade is an adviser on President Trump's Hispanic Advisory Council and National Diversity Coalition and a policy adviser for America First Policies, a pro-Trump nonprofit organization.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

This Hispanic Heritage Month, let us not lose heart or surrender our dreams

By Sandra Pedroarias

This year, the U.S. will usher in Hispanic Heritage Month with renewed assurances that a wall costing a mind-boggling \$10 billion to \$21.6 billion will be erected along our southern border — a physical structure further dividing two neighbors and vital trade partners.

This year, many Latinos will take part in the Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 celebrations with painful awareness that promises made to a generation of Dreamers have once again been broken. These young students, blue- and white-collar professionals, arrived as minors — and not of their own volition. Yet today, the estimated 800,000 covered under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program know no country other than the U.S. as their home.

They are not criminals, and the majority do not see themselves as perpetual victims doomed to a life of government dependency. To the contrary, most seek empowerment and opportunity. Most share a vision and purpose of making their families, their communities and, yes, their country, greater.

Some may already have experienced the trauma of family separation during a period of mass deportation under the previous administration. Others live with a growing uncertainty about their futures under the current one. It is now difficult for them to trust that congressional leaders maintain the resolve, political will or ability to bring closure to this issue within a few months' time.

Still, the 59 million Latinos living in the U.S. must not lose heart. And the Dreamers — who constitute a fraction of the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in the country — must not surrender their dreams of escaping the shadows to live freer, more fulfilling and empowered lives.

While President Obama created DACA by executive order in response to mounting political pressure, advocates in the current scenario may be less successful in influencing Congress to resolve it by spring. If Congress fails to act, it will be incumbent upon President Trump to reconsider. He has signaled that he might.

Given the confluence of these events, it is important to reflect on President Ronald Reagan's legacy. In 1988, Reagan expanded to a month what President Lyndon Johnson had established as a week in 1968.

The "Great Communicator" sparked a nation's imagination with his aspirational message of individual empowerment, inspiring us to believe that America was a "shining city on the hill." He worked to tear down walls, not erect them. He worked to contain the overreach of a bureaucratic and often inefficient federal government, while tempering justice with mercy in the enforcement of our nation's immigration laws.

As a proud daughter of Mexican

immigrants, I am grateful for Reagan's leadership. He was prescient in understanding the value of court- ing this important part of the American electorate. And, he was brilliant in leveraging Hispanic Heritage Month, not as a tool of division, but rather as a demonstration that Hispanics were just as American as those intrepid immigrants who once crossed not a river but an ocean in search of liberty, religious freedom and greater economic opportunity.

As a friend and acquaintance to more than one decent, hard-working, undocumented resident, I cannot help but think about how compelling and life-affirming the stories we tell this month and beyond can be. This is especially true for immigrants who have been made to feel they are second-class citizens in an increasingly hyper-partisan political environment.

As an advocate for personal freedom, self-sufficiency and the free market, I know the value of telling life stories that blunt stereotypes. When we set the record straight about who we are as a community, we show that we are not a drain but instead a value-add to the broader society.

This is not to say we have no problems to overcome. Certainly, we must do a better job of engaging in honest conversations about how to encourage more legal immigration, ensure fairness for those who come here legally, and prevent the kind of horrific abuse and exploitation stemming from human trafficking.

Certainly, we must do more to champion an ownership society within a free-market construct — a community of savers, homeowners and business owners who are economic stakeholders in America. As stakeholders, our community will naturally advocate for fair tax policies and those that reward hard work, sound financial decision-making and informed risk-taking, helping families keep more of the wealth they create.

And certainly, we must still do more to provide our community with greater school choice and quality education, as this is the best mechanism for upward social mobility.

Sadly, the truth is that none of these arguably more important issues will gain traction within a community continually used as a political bargaining chip on the question of immigration. We are in essence a mixed-status community.

The Pew Research Center estimates that Latinos will comprise almost 30 percent of the U.S. population by 2060. Let us hope that by then we are living in a political system that rewards both hard work and heart — and not one that appears so bent on destroying the latter that it threatens to annihilate both.

Pedroarias is director of Hispanic and Latino outreach for Think Freely Media (TFM) and manages Think Freely Latino (www.thinkfreelylatino.org), a TFM project. She previously served as senior adviser to the U.S. treasurer and acting director of Global Women's Issues at the U.S. Department of State.

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HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

The time is here to celebrate and defend our Latino community

By Kenneth Romero-Cruz

As we approach Hispanic Heritage Month, Americans of Latino descent have much to be proud of. Our community's impact on the socioeconomic wellbeing of this nation is at its peak. Latino purchasing power in the U.S. is worth \$1.3 trillion, according to Nielsen. That is more than the GDP of Australia or Spain. In the arts, sciences and every other facet of American life, from the No. 1 song of the summer to the Supreme Court, Latinos have become an integral part of this nation's diverse mosaic. Our community is not only the largest minority but is projected to become close to a quarter of the entire country's population in just a few decades.

That is why it is so troublesome that on issue after issue, our community seems to constantly be placed in the crosshairs of politicians who would scapegoat Latinos for political gain — both on the state and federal levels. Whether it is by passing egregious and anti-rule of law bills such as S.B. 4 in Texas or phasing out the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, Latinos seem to have become the target of choice by politicians who prefer to build walls that divide us instead of bridges that unite us as a nation.

The National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators is proud to stand with a coalition of like-minded elected officials and grassroots organizations that advocate on a bipartisan basis for the rights of all Americans, including Latinos. We strongly believe that laws such as Texas's S.B. 4, are not only unconstitutional, but shameful. This "show me your papers law on steroids" flies in the face of the freedoms and liberties that Americans hold dear, and we are confident that the courts will ultimately strike it down. That is why we are proud to be the first national Latino organization calling for a boycott of the state until the law is repealed.

Similarly, we were proud to become the first national Hispanic group to call for the decriminalization of cannabis, given its history of being rooted in racism, false science and criminal persecution against Latinos. Cannabis has the potential to be used to treat critical medical needs, such as epilepsy, anorexia, cancer and others. In addition, those who choose to use it recreationally should be required to do so responsibly and pay taxes, while the government eliminates the dangerous cartels and underground economy that is so detrimental to our society.

The issue of DACA is also close to our hearts. This is an American issue that strikes at the core of who we are as a country. Children that were brought here as minors, through no fault of their own, should not be deported to countries they have never known and whose language they may not even speak. "Dreamers" are American in every way except a piece of paper. We cannot deny them the right to be with their families, most of whom include citizen spouses, children or siblings, to continue serving in our military, contributing to the economy, and paying taxes. It is not only cruel, but it is the wrong approach for the nation.

On this month, as we celebrate the plethora of contributions Hispanics have made to the United States, we must also redouble our efforts to remind those who would target our community that Latinos have helped build this nation into the powerhouse of prosperity and diversity it is today. An attack on Latinos, therefore, should be considered an attack on all Americans, and we intend to advocate for our rights respectfully but firmly as a fundamental part of the nation we all love and cherish.

Romero-Cruz is the executive director of the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators, which represents the interests of more than 400 Latino state legislators in the 50 states, U.S. territories and Puerto Rico.



Romero-Cruz: DACA is an American issue that strikes at the core of who we are as a country.

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Reps. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.) and Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla.) are among the record 45 Hispanic members of Congress this session.

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Latino representation in Congress at record high, but far from parity

By Rafael Bernal

• Hispanic legislative representation has grown consistently over the last 40 years but still remains far from proportional to the Hispanic share of the United States population.

The 115th Congress has a record 45 Hispanic members. Between the Democratic Congressional Hispanic Caucus's (CHC) 31 members and the 14 Republicans with a Hispanic background, that's 8.4 percent of Congress.

It's an all-time high but still falls far short of the general population, where about 57 million Hispanic people make up 17 percent of the country as the nation's largest minority group.

"The Hispanic Caucus has made incremental progress in its growth, but statistically we still lag way behind what our representation should be proportionately," said Rep. Filemon Vela (D-Texas).

Vela, who at one point resigned from the CHC, said it's "exciting" to have fresh, young faces in the group. Still, Vela says upcoming challenges will define whether the CHC represents its community. One of the biggest challenges looms in December, when Congress will respond to President Trump's decision to reverse the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which provided work permits for immigrants brought illegally to the U.S. as children.

"I think we will [achieve representational parity] eventually, but you have to remember that 17 percent of the population, not even half of them are voting age yet."

Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.)

"I think December is gonna tell a lot, as Congress veers towards reversing the president's decision on DACA and ensuring that not a penny is spent on the border wall," Vela said.

"Clearly, if the CHC does not stand on both those issues," he added, "then there's no reason for a Hispanic Caucus to exist."

Still, despite its current challenges, the CHC has grown aggressively, selecting and recruiting candidates in vulnerable districts. In the 2016 elections, the caucus added five members, growing to 31 lawmakers.

"If you look at the last presidential election, despite flawed exit polls, what we know from the actual data [is that] Latino turnout increased substantially," said Cristóbal Alex, president of Latino Victory, a progressive group that's trying to grow Latino political participation.

"The most important data point is that 28 percent of Latino voters were first-time voters," said Alex.

According to Alex, only 15 percent of African-American voters and 16 percent of white voters were first-time voters in 2016.

"These young first-time voters are the future of the country, and Congress needs to look like them," he added.

On the Republican side, growth has been slower — in part because of Trump's contentious relationship with Hispanic groups.

"There's a little bit of a mixed bag," said Mario Lopez, president of the Hispanic Leadership Fund, a conservative advocacy group.

Lopez pointed to young leaders like Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla.), who's taken on difficult causes like immigration. Still, Curbelo now ranks as one of

House Democrats' top targets in 2018. And Trump's pardon of controversial former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Arizona once again roiled relations with Hispanic voters.

"On the flip side, there have been things like giving amnesty to Joe Arpaio — I think that flies in the face of the legal issues, logic, common sense and the mountain of evidence presented against him for abusing the rights of American citizens," said Lopez.

"Not everyone in the right is interested in having more Latinos in the base. In fact, some are hostile to it," he added.

Lopez added that Latino Republicans have lost powerful leaders, like former Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart (Fla.) and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (Fla.), who will retire at the end of her current term.

Still, Lopez is optimistic that as the second-fastest-growing demographic group — after only Asian-Americans — Latinos will have enough space for a healthy conservative representation.

Much of that demographic growth has yet to be reflected in the polls, since more Latinos reach voting age each year than any other group.

"I think we will [achieve representational parity] eventually, but you have to remember that 17 percent of the population, not even half of them are voting age yet," said Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.).

"Our numbers are coming later, not right now," he added.

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HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH



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Aguilar: President Trump's directive to Congress to take legislative action on Dreamers shows we are closer to a permanent solution for those young immigrants than ever before.

Thanks to Trump, the dream is alive

By Alfonso Aguilar

After months of speculation, Attorney General Jeff Sessions finally announced that the Trump administration would terminate the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that President Obama created through executive action. The program shielded from deportation 800,000 undocumented immigrants — the so-called Dreamers — who entered the country illegally as minors through no fault of their own.

It's true that most in the Hispanic community anticipated the president's decision. Candidate Trump had denounced the program as "executive amnesty." Yet, many harbored a glimmer of hope. President Trump had not followed through on his campaign promise to end DACA on the first day of his administration. Moreover, since the election, he had stated that he would "deal with DACA with heart" and that its beneficiaries "shouldn't be very worried."

So when the announcement came, there was surprise and great disappointment. "Taking DACA away is taking us back to a really dark time for immigrants," a 23-year-old Maryland resident who came to the U.S. from Mexico when she was seven years old told The Washington Post. Archbishop José Gómez of Los Angeles called the announcement "a national tragedy and a moral challenge to every conscience." I must admit that I also expressed my outrage on live television. Speaking on CNN immediately after the announcement, I denounced it as "insulting and sad," adding that "if the goal of the president of the United States [was] to deal with 'heart' with DACA recipients, then the president failed miserably."

Having Attorney General Sessions, an anti-immigration hardliner, deliver the message certainly didn't help — it added insult to injury. As expected, he couched the announcement in his usual restrictionist rhetoric, stressing the unlawful way in which DACA recipients entered the country and falsely arguing that they had taken jobs away from Americans. Studies consistently show that Dreamers greatly contribute to the economy and help create jobs for Americans. Sessions said it was now up to Congress to address the issue, but he didn't provide any administration guidance on what should be done, much less any commitment that the president would be involved in the process of finding a legislative solution.

It did seem at the moment that the nativist forces within the administration had won this round and that Sessions and Stephen Miller, his pupil and former aide and now policy advisor to the president, had swayed Trump not to weaken his stance against DACA or show any willingness to help the Dreamers.

In just a few hours after the decision was made public, however, everything changed dramatically. With one tweet early in the evening, President Trump upended the day's announcement. The president now urged Congress to "legalize DACA," the program that only a few hours ago his own attorney general had derided for supposedly hurting American workers, saying that if "they

can't, I will revisit the issue." Not only was the president expressing clearly that he wanted Congress to pass legislation to provide relief to Dreamers, but he seemed to indicate he would be willing to postpone the termination of DACA if they didn't.

It seems obvious that the president wasn't happy with the negative reaction he saw all day to Session's heartless announcement and decided to follow his initial instincts to deal with the issue in a reasonable and compassionate way. And his abrupt change of mind didn't seem to be an extemporaneous response to bad media coverage. After talking to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and apparently at her behest, Trump took to Twitter once again to reassure concerned DACA recipients that they would not be deported during the six-month phaseout of the program; that "you have nothing to worry about. No action!"

All of a sudden we find ourselves closer to finding a real and permanent solution for the Dreamers. We, in fact, have never been closer. House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) said that the president "made the right call" and that Dreamers should "rest easy" because Congress will take action to let them remain in the country. Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois acknowledged the quickly changed and more hopeful political environment, saying that

All of a sudden we find ourselves closer to finding a real and permanent solution for the Dreamers.

he has come to see the decision to end DACA "not so much as an epitaph, [but] as an opportunity, because we heard the White House quickly: 'We want to do something.' We want to respond with a law that we can back."

Needless to say, we still have to wait and see if a polarized Washington can actually come together and pass a bill that provides permanent legal status to the Dreamers, but if it does happen, and I think it will, the irony will be evident. The president, who has been much maligned by many as anti-Hispanic and racist, and not his predecessor who smugly portrayed himself as the advocate of immigrants, may be the one who ends up forging the necessary bipartisan consensus to ensure that Congress begins passing legislation to bring good and hardworking undocumented immigrants out of the shadows.

Aguilar is president of the Latino Partnership for Conservative Principles and former chief of the U.S. Office of Citizenship in the administration of President George W. Bush.



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