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Rescinding DACA: More than Just the Dreamers

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Rescinding DACA: More than Just the Dreamers

By Rev. Craig B. Mousin, university ombudsman, DePaul University

For the academy, the recent rescinding of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program affects more than just the “dreamers.” The dreamers belong to a large community that has suffered under recent federal immigration policies. Much needed attention has focused on the dreamers, individuals who were brought to this nation at a young age and who are unable to become Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR) or citizens. Catholic colleges and universities have welcomed dreamers and have graduated many since its inception by the Obama administration. Many presidents, such as DePaul University’s Dr. A. Gabriel Esteban, have [issued statements](#) opposing rescission and offering support to the dreamers as members of our communities.

In [previous issues](#) of *Update*, Gary Miller and Mariella Palacios discussed the importance of building a productive workplace community based on collaboration and dedication to a mission that reflects the values of the institution by recognizing the dignity of each individual. They noted that Catholic Social Thought (CST), while sustaining their point, merged the workplace and the greater community. Miller cited *Centesimus Annus*, highlighting that each of us works for the needs of our families, community, nation, and “ultimately all humanity” (Section 43). If we seek to build ethical and productive workplaces, consistent with our mission, we cannot ignore the greater community.

As we gather for another academic year, we must address the tragedies of the greater community that will be brought to our campuses. As the dreamers return to our campuses fearing loss of work authorization and facing deportation, our academic community confronts even greater challenges stemming from new immigration enforcement policies. Bishop Joe S. Vásquez, chair of the USCCB Committee on Migration, [warned last February](#) about two new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) policies. Almost 10 million persons reside in the United States without authorized immigration status; most experts agree that DHS has the infrastructure to deport about 400,000 persons each year. Thus, as a matter of effective law enforcement, the Obama administration established enforcement priorities that focused on persons previously deported or those with criminal convictions. DHS eliminated those priorities, placing anyone without LPR status at risk of deportation.

Bishop Vásquez also challenged the policy that expanded the relationship between federal immigration authorities

and local law enforcement. He wrote that these new policies “will harm public safety rather than enhance it” and will “needlessly separate families, upend peaceful communities, endanger the lives and safety of the most vulnerable among us, break down the trust that currently exists between many police departments and immigrant communities, and sow great fear in those communities.”

Those seeds of fear have now germinated. A news story about a deported person may cause a moment of sympathy, but one needs to view the cumulative effects of the tactics used by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to disrupt our communities by infiltrating homes, parishes, and community gathering places. The new enforcement procedures threaten not just unauthorized persons, but also the people who constitute their families, parishes, and communities. Our students, staff, and faculty live within complex family relationships of citizens, LPRs, unauthorized persons, asylum applicants, and others seeking diverse immigration remedies. The Catholic institutions that have built their campuses in immigrant neighborhoods proclaim their mission of welcoming immigrants and educating first-generation children. The tension and fear produced by enhanced enforcement policies leaves no one in these wide communities untouched.

In addition, many states have legislated anti-immigrant laws that focus on driver’s licenses, rental properties, or

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health care. Some studies have revealed the cascading negative effects of these laws, namely, extending beyond those who are unauthorized to increase discrimination against LPRs and other citizens. These state laws, combined with enhanced ICE enforcement, spill beyond the intended targets and weaken our communities.

Our nation has known earlier times when anti-immigrant hysteria led to attacks against those who were foreign-born. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Know Nothing movement fostered anti-immigrant and anti-Roman Catholic fever. Abraham Lincoln, however, observed that by 1858, immigrants constituted almost half of the nation's population. Though these newcomers knew not the Founders who had observed the self-evident truth that all are created equal, Lincoln argued it was not birth here or even ability to trace one's genealogy back to the Founders, but rather the link to "the electric cord in the Declaration" of equality that binds us in community.

Our nation still struggles with its goal of equality. Lincoln's moral sentiment of equality provides a civic language comparable to CST's words on human dignity. Equality's self-evidence is revealed through human dignity. It is not just the dreamers, but many of our staff and faculty who come from communities that deal with the daily consequences of these new policies that deny equality. Rescission and enhanced enforcement hurt all of us. To continue to build the academic community of equality and dignity, we must support not just dreamers, but also their families and neighbors — for they are our families and neighbors. They constitute our community. We who believe that community enables us to fulfill our mission must oppose these policies that break the bonds of community.

The opinions expressed in this column are the author's alone and do not represent those of DePaul University or the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities.

We invite you to respond to this column through the [Human Resources and Mission](#) blog. This will permit a fuller discussion of mission and CST in the workplace.

Notes and Other Resources

For a more thorough discussion of the complexity of immigrant status in family relationships, see generally, Marie Friedmann Marquardt et al., *Living "Illegal," The Human*

Face of Unauthorized Immigration (The New Press, 2011). For additional information on the consequences of linking federal immigration enforcement to local law enforcement, see Craig B. Mousin, *A Clear View from the Prairie: Harold Washington and the People of Illinois Respond to Federal Encroachment of Human Rights*, 29 S. Ill. L. J. 285 (Fall 2004/Winter 2005) at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2997657.

More than 600 college and university presidents have shown support for DACA students; see <https://www.pomona.edu/news/2016/11/21-college-university-presidents-call-us-uphold-and-continue-daca>. See also Shireen Korkzan, "Despite Catholic Campus Support, DACA Students Fear Deportation," *National Catholic Reporter*, February 23, 2017, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/justice/despite-catholic-campus-support-daca-students-fear-deportation>.

For more information on private detention, see September 1, 2017, "The Strange Death of José de Jesús" (Parts 1 & 2), podcasts 1736 and 1737, at <http://www.npr.org/podcasts/510016/latino-usa>. Information on the targeting of children can be found at The Young Center, "DHS Targeting Parents and Relatives of Newly Arrived Children," at <http://theyoungcenter.org/stories/dhs-targeting-parents-and-relatives-of-newly-arrived-children/>.

Two studies that discuss some of the health consequences of the current immigration climate are Joanna Almeida, et al., "The Association Between Anti-Immigrant Policies and Perceived Discrimination Among Latinos in the US: A Multilevel Analysis," *SSM Population Health Journal*, vol. 2, December 2016, pp. 897-903, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2016.11.003>; and Morgan Philbin, et al., "State-Level Immigration and Immigrant-Focused Policies as Drivers of Latino Health Disparities in the United States," *Social Science & Medicine*, April 7, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.04.007>.

The Abraham Lincoln quote can be found in his "July 10, 1858, speech at Chicago." *The Speeches of Abraham Lincoln, Including Inaugurals and Proclamations* (Lincoln Centenary Association, NY: 1908), pp. 72-74.