
Undocumented Students Challenges In The United States: DACA As A Solution

Many undocumented children feel caught between the generation, belonging to neither the immigrant nor the citizen. They have to deal with the fact that they are not given access to legal services. Undocumented students usually have no role in the decision to come to this country; they are usually brought to this country by their parents or relatives. Many Americans take their rights as citizens for granted, and don't often stop to think about what their lives would be like if they did not have access to all these legal services. Some of these rights could include education, government subsidies, and healthcare. Without these rights, they would be living just like the 12 million undocumented immigrants in the United States, who struggle to make a living for themselves and their families. In this paper I will address the obstacles faced by undocumented immigrants and focus on undocumented students brought to the United States as minors who face extreme difficulties in pursuing an education and establishing financial stability. Undocumented students who have been in the United States since they were children should be granted legal citizenship.

Undocumented students are becoming a growing outrage in the United States. It has been a constant battle amongst the students, the schools, and the Government. According to the undocumented and immigrant students statistics " In the United States there are 3.2 million undocumented children and young adults under the age of 24." This means that there are 3.2 million undocumented students who struggle to receive the education they need. According to a report by the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), " more than a quarter of undocumented male students and more than a third of undocumented female students said they were moderately or severely anxious." The undocumented students who participated in this study said their anxiety and depression came from financial worries, fear of deportation, and feelings of isolation. It should have been obvious that undocumented students were under all this stress. Yet, it took until 2015 for an academic institution to recognize and report on the mental state of undocumented immigrants.

For undocumented students, the realization that even when they work to their full potential they will still be denied basic rights and equal treatment which is a major downfall. It negatively impacts their life chances and reduces the likelihood that they will continue pursuing their educational and career goals. All of this has major psychological consequences and negative impacts on mental health. According to the ' American Psychological Association ' " immigrants who fear deportation are much more vulnerable to heart disease, asthma, diabetes, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorders, and their children are more likely to experience psychological distress, academic difficulties, and disruptions in their development." Undocumented students do really suffer from psychological problems whether its from having anxiety, depression or the fear of being separated from their family when all they come here is to accomplish their dreams. The fact that even American students suffer from stress and sometimes even anxiety especially when in college, we at least have the sources we need in order to receive help while undocumented students suffer from all these issues, yet have no sources to go to that are trustworthy. These are major factors that most people don't know, undocumented students shouldn't be having these issues when all they are trying to achieve is a degree for a high education.

DACA has helped and benefited a lot of undocumented students since it gives temporary protection from deportation and allows for certain undocumented students to receive a work permit. It gives undocumented children a chance to get a good education, and most importantly it brought a greater influence about improving immigration. In the case of Bryan De Los Santos, who is an undocumented student who has pretty much lived here his whole life was unable to go to Washington with his classmates due to him not having a legal status. He said “ Knowing that I was in this country without permission from the government changed the way I lived my life — but I have tried not to let it limit me.” It is difficult to understand that you are not able to go out of town due to not have a legal status, and specially when this is the only country they know. Once DACA was approved he applied and after years of not being able to travel with his classmates he was able to go to Washington, DACA opened so many doors for him and many other undocumented students. DACA was a blessing to most undocumented students, it was only an executive order which means it has many limitations. The article ‘ Facts about DACA’ by Lori Robertson, DACA does not provide a pathway to permanent legal status. It is only valid for two years at a time, so about every eighteen months the student must re-apply and pay \$500 to the Department of Homeland Security. Even, if you are part of DACA the students are ineligible from financial aid and other government benefits. Despite receiving protected status, DACA recipients are still considered undocumented.

The issues of undocumented students are much too optimistic and give a false impression of what life in America is actually like. The struggle these students are faced with are unbelievable. They are simply trying to get somewhere in life, they want and crave an education just like the rest of us. These students are the future of America and many people prevent them from getting the education they deserve. These students face incredible economic and legal, social and emotional, and educational barriers. They have been forced to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance for years, sing the national anthem at sporting events, respect American holidays, learn the language, put money into the economy, and assimilate into American culture. It is time their voices are heard.