

COMMENTARY By DR. DHANPAUL NARINE

Defend DACA!



Dr. Dhanpaul Narine

“This means that we might have to go back to the shadows,” said the two sisters. They were referring to President Trump’s decision to rescind the DACA program. The sisters were brought to Richmond Hill in Queens as babies. They went to school and attended their local houses of worship.

At weekends, they shopped with their parents on Liberty Avenue and heard about the stories of their parents’ homeland. In fact, there wasn’t a day that they didn’t hear about Guyana, Trinidad, and Surinam, or about life in the United States.

Richmond Hill was home and it reflected the diversity of America. The sisters were part of this diversity. They saw how hard their parents worked and they wanted a better life, to dream and to become a part of the fabric that is America. It was in High School that the sisters realized that something was amiss. They applied for a grant and were asked to provide a social security number.

They were told to get one and to resubmit their application. After several attempts came to nothing the sisters arrived at the frightening conclusion that they were illegal. They could be deported to Guyana, a country that they knew nothing about. The reality is that the sisters are not alone. There are hundreds of children in a similar position in Richmond Hill, and thousands across the United States.

Advocates for the Dreamers argue that we would not be in this position if President Obama had stuck to his campaign promise. In 2008, Obama said he would fix immigration in his first year if he were elected. He became President but immigration faded

into the background as Obama set his sights on reforming the health care system.

In 2012, Obama promised again to fix immigration if he were giv-

welcomed by a number of organizations. Latino Civil Rights groups saw it as “hugely important” for young people who could now pursue their dreams.

The announcement came five months before the 2012 elections and had enormous political significance. Mitt Romney criticized Obama for DACA while Marco Rubio described it as a “short term answer to a long term problem.” What is interesting is

meant no more living in the shadows.

The Dreamer added, “Now we can actually pay our taxes; we can have a job where we get paid by check, not by cash. So, for me, it would be like a chance ...to continue to do things legally and to continue doing things the way a person from the United States should be doing it.” The statistics show the importance of the DACA program.

In Texas, there are

ers, politicians, and laypersons have all come out in support of the Dreamers.

Speaker Paul Ryan stated that the Dreamers should “rest easy.” This sounds good but Ryan assured the Dreamers months ago that he was working on a solution. He does not have much to show for it at this point. Obama called Trump’s decision “cruel and self-defeating” while Ryan praised Trump for doing the right thing.

out of status, cannot legally work, and worse of all, could face deportation.

Trump has stated that, “Our enforcement priorities remain unchanged. We are focused on criminals, security threats, recent border-crossers, visa overstays, and repeat violaters.” Trump has also pointed out that DACA recipients are not high on the list for enforcement unless they get in trouble with the law.

But what happens in cases where an out of status person is picked up for a traffic offense? According to reports the person could face deportation in some states for minor offences. While Congress plans its next move it should be pointed out that the leaders of the corporate world have come out in support of the Dreamers.

The executives at Apple, Microsoft, and Starbucks in an open letter said, “Dreamers are vital to the future of our companies and our economy. With them, we grow and create jobs.”

A number of organizations have come together and will be holding a DACA Rally on Saturday September 16, at 133 Street and Liberty Avenue at Sybil’s Triangle. The Rally starts at 2:00 pm.



Protestors outside the White House calling on Americans to defend DACA

en another chance. Many believed him but little happened when it came to an immigration policy. But it was in 2012 that Obama sought to remove the fear of deportation for young people that came in the US as children. Thus the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals or DACA was born.

According to Obama the Dreamers, “are young people who study in our schools, play in our neighborhoods, pledge allegiance to our flag. They are Americans in their hearts and minds, and in every single way but one: paper.” This was

that the Republicans did not advance proposals of their own, except to say that they were studying the situation. In fact, Romney was a supporter of ‘attrition by enforcement’ which means that he wanted to make life so uncomfortable for immigrants that they would choose to leave the country.

Obama went on to win the 2012 elections and found an inhospitable climate in Congress for his immigration policies. But at least DACA was there to show his good intent. What did DACA mean for the children? One Dreamer said that it

over 120,640 persons that are in the program. They contribute around \$6 billion annually to the GDP of America and similar contributions are also to be found in other states. Where do we go from here and what are the prospects of a satisfactory resolution to the DACA crisis?

Trump promised to revoke the Executive Orders of Obama during the campaign. But he said that he loved the kids and would treat DACA with heart.

Since rescinding the order there has been widespread support for DACA. University lead-

According to Ryan, “The president was right to give us the time to find that compromise.” At the end of a six-month window Congress will have to work out a deal. Senator Chuck Schumer described Trump’s decision as “heartless and shameless.”

He stated that six months might not be enough to consider the reforms, particularly if Trump ties in comprehensive immigration reforms in the discussions.

What happens if Congress cannot find a compromise in the next six months? If that happens the Dreamers would be

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The views expressed in this column are solely those of the writer and do not necessarily represent the views of the THE WEST INDIAN.