All of us have a dream.[[1]](#footnote-1)[[2]](#footnote-2) We dream of success for ourselves and our loved ones. We dream of a better future for our children. We dream an American dream, which our ancestors shared when they arrived on these shores, that this great nation is the land of opportunity for all.

Daysi from Monmouth County has a dream.[[3]](#footnote-3) She came to this country when she was just nine years old. Daysi is one of over 2 million New Jerseyan immigrants, and one of over 22 thousand New Jerseyan DACA recipients.[[4]](#footnote-4)

While she was still a nursing student, Daysi worked every day to save lives during the coronavirus pandemic.[[5]](#footnote-5) She is one immigrant nurse out of the thousands of immigrant nurses who make up over a quarter of New Jersey’s nurses, who serve our hospitals, who keep us healthy. And she contributes her fair share of taxes, like other immigrants, who contribute over $30 billion to New Jersey’s economy.[[6]](#footnote-6)

This is the only country Dreamers ever called home. They are as American as you or I. We made a promise to Daysi and every Dreamer that we would fix our broken immigration system.[[7]](#footnote-7) We would prioritize protecting our country from threats to national security and not hunt down hardworking families. “Felons, not families. Criminals, not children.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

I am ashamed to say that we have not been faithful to that promise. Instead of using our resources to secure our borders against danger, we detained families seeking asylum.[[9]](#footnote-9) Instead of putting criminals behind bars, we put children in cages.[[10]](#footnote-10) Instead of passing a law to create a path to citizenship for Dreamers, Congress has sat on its hands for ten years.

Enough is enough. We need decisive immigration reform. We need to prioritize the immigrants already living and working inside America. We need legislation that outlines a clear path to citizenship. DACA recipients live in limbo, renewing their right to remain in their country but unable to secure it, and since October, the courts have barred new applicants who are eligible for deferred action from getting it.[[11]](#footnote-11)

It’s clear that DACA is not enough. We need a Congress that is willing to act and codify a pathway to citizenship for the 800 thousand Dreamers nationwide.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Immigration reform starts here, with us. If the United States is a nation of immigrants, then since my great-grandparents landed on Ellis Island, New Jersey has been the front door.[[13]](#footnote-13)[[14]](#footnote-14) If we believe in the American dream, then it is time to wake up and make it a reality.

Look around you. 23% of New Jerseyans are immigrants.[[15]](#footnote-15) One out of every five people in your home is an immigrant. These people are not strangers. They are your friends, your neighbors, your classmates, your co-workers.

Join me in protecting our community. Vote for your friends. Vote for your neighbors. Vote for your country and vote for New Jersey. I am proud to represent each and every resident of this great state, and I will fight for our community alongside you.

Thank you.

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