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AUG. 2001
DREAM Act is born
Senators Durbin (D-IL) and Hatch (R-UT) introduce the first version of the DREAM Act. The bill gets buried by the opposition.

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2002-2006
Blockade
Multiple bills with language similar to the previous DREAM Act are brought forward by both parties in Congress, but none succeed.

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MAR. 2006
Broad support
The DREAM Act is introduced in both chambers with sponsorship of 128 representatives and 39 senators. It fails to pass almost a year and a half later.

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OCT. 2007
The first filibuster
A new bill is proposed by Senators Durbin, Hagel (R-NE) and Lugar (R-IN) but is filibustered and does not make the floor of the Senate.

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NOV. 2010
Call for action
President Obama and top Democrats call for new version of the Act, which is quickly presented in the House with bipartisan support.

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DEC. 2010
A new hope
The House of Representatives passes the a new version of the DREAM Act by a 216-198 vote.

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JUNE 2012
DACA is created
President Obama announces a deferred action program helping those who entered the country without documentation as infants.

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OCT. 2011
California DREAM
Governor Jerry Brown signs into law the so-called “California DREAM,” providing undocumented students with access to public and private education funding.

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DEC. 2010
A new filibuster
Ten days later, the bill dies in the Senate after Republicans, joined by Democrats, win a motion to end debate on the floor.

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JUNE 2013
Dead by inertia
A bipartisan bill passes the Senate 68-32, with 14 Republicans voting in favor. However, the House never acts and the bill expires.

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NOV. 2014
DAPA is presented
After defeats in Congress, President Obama announces DAPA, extending benefits to parents enjoyed by DACA recipients.

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DEC. 2014
DAPA hits court
Texas and 26 other states sue the Obama Administration to halt the deferred action programs.

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FEB. 2015
Judge blocks DAPA
The District Court issues injunctions against DAPA and the DACA extension. The Administration appeals to the Supreme Court.

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JUNE 2016
The toughest loss
Supreme Court deadlocks in a 4-4 decision, thus maintaining the District Court stay of DAPA and the DACA extension.

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JUNE 2017
Opposition rises
Republican state officials, led by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, demand that the Trump Administration swiftly rescind DACA.

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SEPT. 2017
The end of DACA
Attorney General Jeff Sessions announces the end of DACA. President Trump leaves the issue for the Congress to act on in six months.

A timeline of the battle in government

The United States invaded Mexico in the mid-19th century, when no national immigration system was in place. But it wasn’t until 1965 that Mexicans were even considered immigrants. The DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act, first introduced in 2001, is the symbol of a battle for immigration reform that has now stretched for 17 years, with congressional action alternately **supporting** ▲ and **opposing** ▼ measures to protect young undocumented immigrants from deportation.

ed immigrants. After all, my parents are the reason I get to be in this country.”

Why do citizens support immigrants and the Dreamers?

Stephanie Cooper Schoen, a 70-year-old citizen, is a supporter of immigrant causes and DACA. “I am Jewish, with grandparents who emigrated to America from Eastern Europe, but with relatives who were later killed during the Holocaust. They would’ve survived had they been accepted as refugees into America or other countries,” says Schoen.

“Those family stories have remained powerful through the decades and have stayed with me.”

Like Schoen, many others feel lucky to be American citizens but give credit to their undocumented ancestors.

“The laws and policies weren’t so strict back then. Borders weren’t so dividing,” she remarks.

For Ashley Shimabukuro, a young woman



From the top: Ashley Shimabukuro, a protestor in Boston.

Photos: George Redak, Priyanka Ketkar

Facing page, counter-clockwise: Rally sign in Boston, Bruno Villegas, Brenda Esqueda, The Taco sisters.

Photos: Priyanka Ketkar, Felipe Rodrigues, Act on a Dream, Priyanka Ketkar

holding a sign reading “I am an American citizen because of the sacrifices of two undocumented immigrants” at the rally, the memories are more recent. Her grandparents came to the U.S. from Mexico. Her grandfather would be denied entry and sent back and he would come back again the next morning. They finally were able to cross the border and were undocumented for a long time.

“I am here because of their hard work and sacrifices,” she says solemnly.

Chelsea Hall, from New Hampshire, is supporting immigration for her the sake of friends. “I don’t have any friends who are specifically on DACA, but I have friends who are sons and daughters of immigrants and I think they are who really make us whole as a country. I think they bring so much love and fun and joy to my life. And I would never want to take away a program that allows them to be a part of our lives.”

Her friend Abby Roden, who is dyslexic, had to take combined classes with ESL learners, most of whom were undocumented. “They were always my community. They adopted me, and I can’t imagine what my life would be without them,” she says. “My best friends are on DACA, and thought they were safe, and were secure about this. I was always freaking out but they were calm. For the first time, when they announced this, my best friend called me and cried.”

How do the undocumented and the Dreamers contribute?

There are a lot of arguments against DACA and legalizing other undocumented immigrants through programs like TEP (Temporary Employment Permit) and DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents). These revolve around how the immigrants are the root of all the crime and drug trafficking, though numerous studies over many years have shown that the undocumented commit crimes at a lower rate than citizens. Those opposing legalizing the status of the undocumented also falsely claim that they make no contributions to the country and take away the jobs rightfully held by citizens.

“We are not criminals, and we are not rapists, and we are not bringing in drugs. People come here, leave their own countries, because they want a better life for themselves, but mostly it is for their children,” reacts Andrea Taco.

“I have been treated as a second class citizen since I was five-years-old. I have no accent. I am as much a citizen of this country, as anyone else. And everybody else too, they work so hard, to provide, to build a life for themselves, so, why is it OK to take our rights away?” asks Andrea who has been working work at Schneider Electric in internal marketing and does graphic design for the cybersecurity program. “I am heavily taxed because I am single. And I don’t have kids, so I don’t get any money back really, so that is my contribution [to the United States],” she explains.

Life... if sent back

Just as most citizens work, follow the law and pay taxes, so do those on DACA. The U.S. stands to lose those contributions if they are deported. And what about the Dreamers? What do they stand to lose?

Romina, originally from Argentina, cannot imagine. “I am a Dreamer. We were kids who came here when we were really young, so this is all we know. If I were to go back, I wouldn’t even know where I would start. I love this country. It is what I call home.”

Andrea Taco says she might cry herself to sleep for two weeks if she is sent back but she is more worried about her sister, Alexandra, who is disabled. “My parents didn’t bring us here as criminal masterminds. They brought us here because my sister needed medical attention.”

“I think I will die of depression if I have to leave,” says Alexandra tearing up. “Here, I can do my own grocery shopping, I am studying to get a driver’s license, I am able to go to work, my house is completely accessible... Independence is empowerment for me and it saddens me to think about losing that.”

“We are hard workers and we will adapt. But just to think that we may have to uproot our lives... and start from zero. It’s sad. It’s not fair.”