

Two Steps Forward, One Step Backward

Throughout several years, immigrants have and continue to shape a tremendous part of the United States. People from all over the world come to the U.S. to become successful and to achieve the American Dream. It's the idea that every U.S. citizen should have an equal opportunity to success through hard work, determination, and initiative. For many years, immigrants who have worked hard and fought for this country have not received any recognition but were rather discriminated against. Today, several immigrants, are going through difficult times because of the issues over immigration. In the 20th century, many immigrants fought for our rights and now with the current president, Donald Trump, and his administration are passing immigration policies or reversing ones that had made a huge impact on minorities and their communities. For the next chapter of the American Dream, many immigrants will become our future leaders. With their hard work they will become successful and will gain the ability to make changes in our society.

There are several events that have happened over the last year that have impacted my family and community, and many revolve around the issues over immigration. I was born in Peru and I came to the U.S. when I was about four years old. My parents had to work hard to get to where they are now and because of their commitment and motivation they now own a tax preparation company. About nine years ago I met my best friend, Jasmine Garcia Gongora Perez. Her family had moved to the U.S. from Mexico around the same time my family had. We have known each other for so long, that now we call each other family. Recently, I found out that one of our uncles, Carlos, who is from El Salvador, had been part of a program known as the Temporary Protected Status. This program allows people whose native countries are afflicted by armed conflict, natural disaster or other dire conditions to remain in the United States. On

January this year, the Trump administration reversed protections for Salvadorans living legally in the U.S. Carlos suffers from kidney failure, and because of TPS he was able to get access to health care. Unfortunately, he will be deported soon and will have to return to El Salvador. We are still unsure if he will have access to health care there or if he will be able to get treatment for his kidney failure near his home town.

I am part of a program called METAS. This organization focuses on helping elementary and high school students with academics by offering tutoring to those who are struggling in school. All of the people who organize the program come from a Latino background and share their experiences with us. Every time we meet, we have an assembly and discuss the issues that are going on around us. Even though the students can't do much about it, we still talk about these issues because we should all be aware about the affairs going on in our country and how it's going to affect us. We discussed things such as the Muslim ban, the DACA program, and the border wall that the Trump administration is planning to build. During those meetings, I learned that several of these things are affecting many students in my community.

All of the people that have come to the U.S., legally or illegally, deserve the right to decide whether they can stay or not. The current president of the United States is trying to pass these racially bias policies, and some have already been set. Those immigration policies are affecting many families. Immigrants have made a great contribution to the U.S. economy and society. Today, what a lot of people are fighting for, is the end to racial division in our country. They are addressing current problems and events by creating organizations in their communities and working together to bring awareness. Immigrants have made great contributions to this country and now more than ever we need to make sure that children of the next generation remember and recognize the struggles that many immigrants have gone and fought through.