

San Diego protests against Trump's repeal of DACA program

Our reporters
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Nationwide protests denounced President Trump's revocation of the DACA program, which threatens deportation of hundreds of thousands of young immigrants, who have spent most of their lives in the United States, back to the countries in which they were born.

About 1,000 people attended a demonstration in San Diego held in front of the County Administration building. The WSWs spoke with many people who came to the rally and passed out leaflets calling for full citizenship rights for all and an end to the attacks on immigrants.

Ana works in public health and mental health services and said she attended the rally because she has siblings who are undocumented and she is passionate about higher education.

She brought her young daughter to the rally, explaining, "My family was worried about us being here, but I wanted to bring her, so she doesn't miss out and knows how important it is to stand up for immigrants and education."

After a discussion about how DACA affected only a minority of immigrants and was used under the Obama administration to appeal to Latino voters, Ana agreed and discussed with WSWs reporters the bipartisan attacks on social services she has witnessed:

"This is something that we all know about in my field, that mental health services are the first things to be cut and a lot of cuts have come down from Governor Brown's administration. All the while, more and more funding is granted to the military.

Education and mental health services, which are so important, are always the first to be cut."

Linda's parents emigrated from Japan to the US when she was a girl. She said, "I was brought here and I didn't have a choice, much like all of these DACA kids. The only difference is that it was right after the war and I was

able to obtain citizenship but they aren't."

Linda explained that her daughter is married to a DACA recipient and everyone in her family is worried about her son-in-law. "He crossed a desert with a baby to look for a better life for him and his daughter! I'm sick of all the things people are saying about immigrants. If you ask me, I have the utmost respect for these people."

Robert told the WSWs his reaction to the repeal of DACA: "I think it's horrible. I think Trump is doing this to make money for businesses. His policies are corporate welfare-based without caring about the people of this country. The two parties have too much power and it's impossible for anyone to challenge them."

He added, "The more we can open our borders safely the better for all countries involved."

Daisy and Emanuel came to rally because they personally know people who will be affected by the news. "I have friends and family that are protected by DACA, Daisy said.

"They're just here for a better future and just want an education. Too many people are at fault just for being immigrants.

"Last time I checked Trump had immigrants working for him. We need to show we support immigrants. Either way people are going to come here even with a border, risking their lives. They shouldn't have to do that anymore."

Jules told the WSWs she was opposed to Trump's xenophobic policies: "It's not what this country is about. Deporting children and parents who are hard-working members of the community is unconscionable. Going after children is the last step of someone who has nowhere left to go."

Jules was receptive to the WSWs analysis on the bipartisan nature of the attack on immigrants and admitted, "There needs to be a break with the two-party system."

The WSWS also received an email from Alejandro, a former DACA recipient who was deported under the Obama Administration and had been interviewed earlier this year.

“I did hear about President Trump ending DACA and I think it is a great mistake that he wants to end it. I think the immediate impact would be fear because it will be back to step one for many of the DACA recipients who were able to obtain a decent job through DACA. Not to mention the fear instilled in them, knowing that the government has the records of them and their families, and can track where they live and can deport them.

“There will be a lot of uncertainty after they cannot renew their temporary work permit and lose their jobs. Not to mention those who were able to finance houses or cars--those valuable objects can be taken away even if they are able to pay for them. Personally, I remember asking the dealership when I financed my car what would happen if I did not have my driver’s license and my permits were taken away, and they told me that they could take my car away even if I continued payments.

“Although universities have stepped up to help financially through private scholarships for undocumented students, a large portion of school expenses falls on them, and without a job permit that DACA provided, many would have to put their education goals on hold.

“For any youth to be deported back to their home countries would be devastating because they would feel like an outcast. The culture is different and a sense of not belonging in ‘your own’ country. I think many would find it difficult to make such transition because it is a much different way of life than living in the United States.

“From my own experience, it has been difficult living in Mexico and even with a US college degree, the situation has not been easy to obtain a job. Many employers praise my skills/experience but due to lack of speaking fluent Spanish, I got rejected a lot. I could not properly articulate my skills that I could offer to the company, so it feels as if I am starting from zero again.

“The Mexican government does have programs, ‘Somos Mexicanos’ or ‘We are Mexican,’ for those students who get deported who need help with the transition financially to some extent, and universities have launched programs as well to help those students finish their studies in Mexico. Other Dreams in Action, ODA, is an organization that was founded by students who were deported, and also are on hand to help with the transition.”

The WSWS also spoke with Andrea Fernandez, a senior

at the University of Texas in San Antonio majoring in public policy. She is also a DACA recipient and spoke about her experience.

“I was born in Mexico City and my parents immigrated in 2005. I had to get DACA to continue my education and work in the city. I’ve worked with non-profits and ever since Trump got elected I’ve been heavily involved in activism.

“I’m a coordinator of dreamer students on my campus. Mainly we are all worried. We look to Congress for change but we see they’re not willing to do that.

“I’ve been expecting this decision on DACA the moment Trump was elected. I will still have my permit for another year, but after that it’s up to Congress. I’m at the mercy of Trump. I’m pretty sure they will use the ‘dreamers’ as a bargaining chip to build the wall. If Congress can’t come to a consensus on the wall they will attack DACA recipients.

“My plan is to stay in the country as long as I can. Many dreamers are getting married just as a backup plan. Currently, DACA students are not able to get any help. There are not a lot of options.

“Dreamers have been used as a political chess piece for years. On the right we are used as scapegoats and the left uses us to get votes. If Hilary had won there would have been no change, but now that Trump won there is only change for the worse.

“There are a lot of misconceptions about DACA. Like how we had endless protection and how we are not paying taxes. But people forget we are paying into the system and there’s nothing we can do about it.”



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