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Living Sin Estatus Legal

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Living Sin Estatus Legal

By Anayeli Auza

Growing up I never knew what living *sin papeles* truly meant. All I knew and all my parents ever told me was that I had to work harder because *no tenia papeles*. In 2012 when I was 15 years old Obama passed DACA, short for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Now, many people don't know this but Obama didn't use his executive power to implement DACA because in his heart he wanted to help undocumented youth. Let's not forget he deported roughly 2.5 million people without counting those that "self-deported." Obama used his executive power to implement DACA because of the pressure he was receiving from protest organized by undocumented youth. Prior to being a DACA recipient, the idea of pursuing higher education was not certain. I knew that as an undocumented person I would have difficulty finding a job that was willing to pay me "under the table." After being granted DACA, and obtaining a social security, I was more confident in searching for a job to pay for my school materials and tuition since undocumented students get the left-over financial aid money. Being a DACA recipient and being protected from deportation has allowed me to feel a sense of security in my day-to-day life. For instance, I was able to apply for a CA driver's license which has allowed me to board airplanes, enjoy a drink with friends and family without feeling targeted for showing a foreign ID, and own a car to drive myself to and from work without feeling like an encounter with law enforcement could lead to a possible deportation.

Trump's presidency really impacted my life because for the 4 years he was in office I didn't know if I was going to be able to keep my work permit. This meant I had to consider dropping out of college and moving back in with my family. Studying abroad was also something that I could no longer consider. On top of that, fearing that my family could get deported at any moment crossed my mind at least twice a day. DACA being cancelled also prevented many youth from obtaining this protection from deportation and 2-year work permit. The change in presidency has brought a lot of hope to the DACA-recipient community. However, even if there was an immigration reform, like Biden promised, it still wouldn't be inclusive of the entire undocumented community. So I always ask myself, "if an immigration reform was to pass but it didn't include people like my parents or my friend that made a dumb choice when they were 17, would I want to benefit from this reform?" As a DACA recipient

I am constantly fighting the good vs bad immigrant narrative. My parents aren't bad for wanting a better future for me and my brother. My parents aren't bad people for crossing the border without documentation. My parents just like many undocumented parents deserve to be included in any immigration reform because they have demonstrated how courageous and resilient they are.