

Shadow Class: College Dreamers in Trump's America

APM Reports Transcript

Stephen Smith: From American Public Media, this is an APM Reports documentary.

Estefania Navarro: They don't want people like me to dream, they just want working hands.

President Trump is ending a program that allowed some undocumented young people to stay and work in the United States. For some, that may mean the end of a dream of going to college.

Woman 1: I worked so hard to be here and it could be gone in like one second.

Most Americans think young people brought here as children should be allowed to stay ... but a vocal group wants them gone.

Ruthie Hendrycks: They shouldn't be in the country to begin with, much less in our colleges.

In the coming hour, Shadow Class: College Dreamers in Trump's America from APM Reports.

Part 1

Protesters: “Immigrants Are Here to Stay! No Justice, No Peace. ”

Denver high school students walked out of their classes after the Trump administration announced it would end a program that gives some undocumented young people temporary permission to stay in the United States. It was one of many protests around the country after Attorney General Jeff Sessions delivered the news:

Jeff Sessions: Good morning. I am here today to announce that the program known as DACA that was effectuated under the Obama Administration is being rescinded.

DACA is Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. It let young people brought to this country as children apply for temporary protection from deportation so they could work, or serve in the military, or go to college.

President Trump’s plan means that if Congress does not act, nearly 800,000 young people will lose that protection. And they could be deported.

Even before Trump’s decision, even while they had DACA, it’s been hard for undocumented young people to go to college.

Producer Sasha Aslanian has been following the lives of some of these undocumented college students since before President Trump’s election. That’s how she found herself in a car last winter with Valentina Garcia Gonzales:

Valentina Garcia Gonzalez: I’m turning left, right?

Sasha Aslanian: Valentina is driving her family’s minivan in suburban Atlanta. She’s 20 years old. Donald Trump has been in office less than a month.

Voice: There’s police.

Valentina thinks there’s a squad car behind her. Her mom and teenage brother spin their heads to look. Valentina glances back to get a better look at the car:

Valentina: They have a thing on top of their thing?

The other car gains on her, then passes. Valentina realizes what she thought was a bar of police lights across the top is only a roof rack, and she curses.

Mother: Valentina!

Valentina: Sorry. Don’t carry those things! We have people that are scared!

Nobody likes having a cop car behind them, but for Valentina’s family, the stakes are higher. Every time they’re in the car, they’re on the lookout for police. Will this be the day they’re caught and deported, never returning to the tidy house they rent in a conservative suburb of Atlanta?

Valentina: I tell my mom like “I clench my butt so hard,” and I get like cold sweats and like I start shaking because it’s this fear that I’ve been conditioned to feel ever since I’ve stepped foot in this country.

[*Music*]

Valentina's parents brought her here from Uruguay when she was a little girl so she could have a better future. And that meant getting an education. She excelled in school. And now, there's a bumper sticker on the family's van that says Dartmouth College. That's the Ivy League school that Valentina attends.

Most undocumented young people don't get to elite colleges. Only about 10 percent go on to higher education at all, and then it's mostly community colleges. DACA has improved their odds, by letting them work to pay tuition, and offering some protection from the threat of deportation. But DACA status was always temporary; they had to reapply every two years. It never offered a guarantee that they'd be able to stay and finish their degrees - or work in the professions they'd trained for.

And a lot of undocumented students told me that over the past year or so, they've felt less confident that they'll be able to stay.

Donald Trump: [*cheers*] Anyone who has entered the United States illegally is subject to deportation! That is what it means to have laws and to have a country. Otherwise we don't have a country.

As a candidate, Donald Trump promised tough enforcement of the nation's immigration laws.

After he won, Valentina and her family felt their nagging, daily fear grow even more acute. But in response, Valentina did something her parents would never have done.

Valentina: The whole week after the election results I wore my *I am an immigrant* shirt - proudly. There's this quote that I hold really dear, it's, "I am my ancestors'

wildest dreams.” And no Trump is going to take that away from me. I am no less because he’s president now.

Valentina is part of a new generation of undocumented immigrants. They’ve come up through the US schools. They speak English, and they’re willing to take risks that their parents would not have dared to take. During her senior year of high school, Valentina started going to protests to demand rights for undocumented people. Her mother asked her not to.

Valentina: “I don't want you to put your name out there because you're risking everything. You're risking not just you you're risking our family.” And for me, my response to that was like, “If not me, then who? Who's going to fight for us? Who's going to fight for me.-If I don't do it then who?” I told her, “You can be comfortable in the shadows. I don't want to be in the shadows.”

In fact, Valentina’s become a poster child for undocumented young people - literally. Here’s Senator Dick Durbin talking about her on the Senate floor a few weeks after Trump’s election.

Dick Durbin: Valentina was six years old when her family brought her to the United States from Uruguay, in South America.

Durbin held up a poster board with a large photo of Valentina. In the picture, she smiles confidently. Her long brown hair curls past her shoulders. A small nose ring and earrings give her a youthful flair.

Durbin: In middle school she received the President's Education Award not once but twice. Once from President Bush and then again from President Obama.

Durbin has been pushing for immigration reform for years. He first sponsored the Dream Act in 2001. It would have given young people who came here as children a chance to earn citizenship by attending college or serving in the military. The Dream Act failed in 2010 but Durbin is still pushing the idea. He says the hard work of students like Valentina ought to pay off.

[*Music*]

Polls show most Americans agree with Durbin: young people like Valentina should stay. Even many Trump voters are sympathetic to these young people who have become known as "Dreamers." But some of Trump's most vocal backers were attracted by his hardline stance on immigration. Trump voter Ruthie Hendrycks says if people like Valentina want to go to college, they can do it in their own countries.

Hendrycks: You mean to tell me that this valedictorian [*sic*] is just going to excel in the United States and we dare can't ask that our laws be enforced but meanwhile some other American can just find out that they weren't accepted because there's not a seat available.

Trump did not do what Hendrycks hoped he would, and end DACA as soon as he took office. As the months passed, students like Valentina began to wonder if they were safe. Trump said Dreamers should rest easy. And then he said an announcement about DACA was coming

That morning, Valentina was back on campus, helping first-year students move into their dorm rooms. She locked her phone in her boss's office so she wouldn't see the news alerts while she helped students unpack their new sheets and mini-fridges.

Valentina: I was thinking about that while I was moving people in today. Just kind of thinking like, "It must be so nice, to not worry about, like, where you're going to be in a year."

Later when she got off work, she learned what had happened to DACA. The program will wind down. No new applications. Young people who already have DACA can keep it until it expires, but unless Congress acts, when their two years are up, none of them will be protected anymore.

Valentina: I feel like I've busted my butt taking 14 AP classes, being top of my class, being the model - quote unquote - "citizen" that this country wants from me. Forgetting my own language, assimilating as much as I possibly can. For what?"

Valentina's got two years left until she graduates. Her DACA will run out before then. With it, will go side jobs, the ability to board an airplane, and her Georgia driver's license.

Valentina: Like my family might not come to my graduation. Because my plan was that I was going to drive them up here because I'm the only one that has a license. So I don't even know if my family is going to witness me, you know, graduating from Dartmouth. Um, yeah, I just realized that now.

[*Music*]

Stephen Smith: Around the country, business leaders, activists, and politicians on both sides of the aisle are calling for the federal government to do something - to find a way to allow the hundreds of thousands of young people who've been covered under DACA to stay here.

Universities issued statements condemning the rollback of DACA. How those colleges came to be admitting undocumented high school graduates in the first place is a story that illustrates the America's conflicting policies on undocumented immigrants. Under the law, most of them shouldn't be in the country at all - but they can't legally be barred from U.S. public schools, either. By law, K-12 schools must admit students regardless of their immigration status.

That's because of a Supreme Court case from a town in Texas. Forty years ago, a handful of undocumented immigrants risked deportation to keep their children in public school in Tyler, Texas. Producer Catherine Winter has that part of our story.

[*Sound of clapping*]

Sonia Limas claps to get her kindergarten class's attention at Douglas Elementary in Tyler, Texas. The kids clap back, and Mrs. Limas asks them to come sit on a rug at the front of the room.

Limas: Go to the carpet the please, everybody sit on the carpet. *Todos vamos en la alfombra con tu trabajo.*

It's a bilingual class. It's Texas Public Schools Week and the kids are learning about school.

Limas: What did you learn about the public schools in Texas?

Child: That we don't have to pay.

Teacher: We don't have to pay! We have free education. *Por eso tenemos que venir todo los días ¿verdad?* That's why we need to come every day.

The kids learned that public education is free. But that hasn't always been true here. Back in 1975, Texas passed a law saying the state wouldn't pay for undocumented kids to go to school. Tyler isn't near the border - it's in northeast Texas, about an hour and a half from Dallas. The school district only had a handful of undocumented children back in the 70s. And it first it let them stay. But just after the school year started in 1977, it started sending kids home from school if they didn't have U.S. birth certificates.

Laura Alvarez Reyna: I know my parents came and picked us up but we didn't know why. Because those things were not discussed with us kids.

That's Laura Alvarez Reyna. She had just started third grade in Tyler when suddenly she couldn't go to school anymore.

Alfredo Lopez: All I can remember that we were sent home one day. And they said we couldn't come back to school.

Alfredo Lopez remembers that day, too. His parents had come to Tyler from Mexico to work tending roses. Tyler is famous for its roses. There's a rose parade every year, and a tea. Wealthy families can sponsor their daughters to be rose queen. But for Alfredo Lopez's family, the roses just meant hard work.

Lidia Lopez: *Pero estaba más mejor aquí que pues allá en México, ¿verdad?*

Alfredo's mother, Lidia Lopez, says it was better than *no* work, which was what the family had in Mexico. But tending roses didn't pay much, and the Tyler schools said her kids couldn't come back unless they paid tuition: a thousand dollars a year for each kid. The family couldn't afford it.

Lopez: *Y entonces pasó el señor ese, Michael McAndrews por allí por donde vivíamos.*

Lidia Lopez says one day when the kids were playing in the yard, a man named Michael McAndrew came by the house. Mike McAndrew is retired now, but back then he was a Catholic social worker who worked with immigrants in Tyler. He was appalled when the school district expelled the children.

Michael McAndrew: I just found it you know completely and totally out of the ordinary that you'd take a child and keep them from going to school. It's just it makes no sense to me.

Mike McAndrew went looking for the families whose kids couldn't go to school. He told them they could fight the expulsions.

McAndrew: They were afraid to even be involved. They thought they were going to be, you know, deported.

Lidia Lopez remembers telling him, "We can't fight. We don't have papers." But Mike McAndrew said they could.

McAndrew: So then, I went looking for a lawyer.

Larry Daves: My name is Larry Daves, I'm an attorney, practicing now down in Trinidad, Colorado.

Larry Daves was in Texas back then, and he took the case for the Lopezes, the Alvarezes and two other families.

Daves: All they wanted to do was get an education, you know. And that's all they wanted. I don't think they had in mind trying to change the world or anything. All they wanted to do was to get a basic education so they would have a fair chance in life.

But he warned his clients that this would be hard - and risky.

Daves: Every client I've ever had, particularly in a civil rights case, I've tried to dissuade them from doing the case. You have to have extraordinary will to actually want to go in there and take on the system and expose yourself to everything you're exposed to in in litigation and of course in this situation on top of that, this worry about being deported.

Daves told his clients that the judge in the case couldn't protect them from immigration agents. But the judge did agree to let them proceed anonymously, using pseudonyms. And he tried to shield them from public attention.

Reyna: Then one day it was very early because it was still dark. The sun hadn't come up yet.

This is Laura Reyna again.

Reyna: And uh we went to the court.

McAndrew: they worked it out that we would go very very early in the morning and in the back door of the courthouse. So nobody even knew what was going on.

Mike McAndrew met the families at the courthouse. The Lopezes arrived in a car packed full of their most valuable stuff, including their black and white TV.

Lopez: *Tenemos un carrito blanco y alli tenemos un television de blanco y negro. Os echo al carro.*

They were afraid there would be immigration agents waiting for them, and they'd be sent back across the border. But no one stopped them as they went into the courtroom.

Alvarez: I remember sitting in there but the English wasn't, we didn't know enough English to know what's going on, but we just sat in there with the adults

Daves: These were kindergarten and 1st grade age kids, and they were just the most well behaved kids I had ever seen.

Larry Daves remembers seeing the kids lined up on the courtroom bench.

Daves: They were so quiet. They were just so sweet and adorable

The judge issued an injunction and sent the children back to school. But then the real legal battle started. There was a trial, and appeals. The case went all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court. It was big news.

Television news: There are an estimated 11,000 children who are in Texas illegally. Illegal aliens. Texas claims that if it has to pay for their education, there won't be enough money to go around for other students and ultimately the quality of education throughout Texas will be diluted.

Lawyers for the kids said they were as entitled to an education as any other Texas resident. Their parents paid property taxes and sales taxes that supported the schools. But the state said the children were a burden on schools, especially in border cities that had seen big increases in the number of undocumented kids. In arguments before the Supreme Court, Texas assistant attorney general Richard Arnett said the schools were drawing immigrants to Texas.

Richard Arnett: We would like to reduce the incentive for illegal immigration, particularly of families and school-age children.

Advocates for the families said immigrants were coming for work, not school. Usually, immigrants with children left those children behind when they crossed the border. The lawyers for the families said the children who did cross the border were entitled to equal protection of the law once they were here. That's a right guaranteed to "any person" within a state's jurisdiction in the 14th Amendment to the Constitution. Lawyers for the state said "any person" didn't include people in the country illegally.

Some of the justices had trouble with that idea. During the oral arguments, they asked whether that logic meant that the state could deny undocumented immigrants other rights

and benefits. Could the state deny immigrants police protection or garbage collection? Here's Justice Thurgood Marshall questioning school district lawyer John Hardy:

Thurgood Marshall: Could Texas deny them fire protection?

John Hardy: Deny them fire protection?

Marshall: Yes, sir. F-i-r-e.

Hardy: Okay. If their home is on fire, their home is going to be protected with the local fire services just--

Marshall: Could Texas pass a law and say they cannot be protected?

Hardy: --I don't believe so.

Marshall: Why not? If they could do this, why couldn't they do that?

Hardy: Because... I am going to take the position that that is an entitlement of the... Justice Marshal., let me think a second. You... that is... I don't know. That is a tough question.

Marshall: Somebody's house is more important than his child.

This seems to be a key thing that swayed the court - that the case was about children. Children who had not chosen to come here.

Television news: In a decision that will have a major impact on the state budgets of at least Texas California and Florida the Supreme Court ruled today that illegal aliens are entitled to free public education

In 1982, the justices ruled for the families, 5-4.

Television news clip: Justice William Brennan said the children were innocent parties brought here illegally by others and likely to stay. He said the state law would

save little financially while infecting the nation with a subclass of illiterates within our boundaries.

Justice Brennan said failing to educate the children would lead to higher state costs in the long run, from unemployment and welfare, and crime. Even the four dissenting justices thought the Texas law was a bad idea - but they thought it wasn't the place of the court to intervene.

The case is called *Plyler v. Doe*. James Plyler was the head of the Tyler schools at the time. He died in 2016. But back in 2007, when he was 82 years old, he told *Education Week* that he was actually glad the district lost the case.

James Plyler: I'm an educator and I knew those youngsters needed an education. I'm glad we could receive them in the school district and be reimbursed from the state and then they were getting an education and that's what we were in business for.

[*Music*]

In the years since the Plyler decision, there have been attempts to challenge the rights of undocumented children to go to school, but they've failed so far. In 1994, California voters passed Proposition 187, which would have barred undocumented people from receiving a lot of state services - including public education. The courts blocked the measure. But during the debate about it, reporters in California got interested in the Plyler case and got in touch with some of the families in Texas.

Alfredo Lopez: We were contacted by *L.A. Times*, and that's the first time that I knew that the case had actually made it to the Supreme Court.

That's Alfredo Lopez, Lidia Lopez's son. He was one of those kids who looked so cute on the bench in the courtroom 40 years ago. Alfredo Lopez says after that hearing, he and his siblings went back to school and they didn't think any more about it. He didn't know anything about the Supreme Court decision. He didn't know his family had won the right for undocumented children - all over the country - to attend public schools for free.

Lopez: I guess it was something that my parents and I don't know the other three families, what they did I guess ended up being a pretty important. So, I guess for that we are thankful.

Some of the other family members say the same thing - they had no idea how important the case was until later. Laura Reyna says after she finished high school, a Spanish-language TV station got ahold of her to ask about the case, and that was the first time she realized what her mom and dad had done.

Laura Reyna: It was such a gift to me - it was! It was the best gift anyone had ever given me because I wouldn't be who I am today without that education.

Laura Reyna is a U.S. citizen now. So is Alfredo Lopez - and so is his mom, Lidia Lopez. It's what Justice Brennan predicted in his opinion: that undocumented immigrants would probably stay here, and possibly become citizens, and so it didn't make sense to leave them uneducated.

Lidia Lopez says the family was just fighting for their kids' education. They had no idea their case would have such far-reaching consequences.

Lidia Lopez: *Como le digo yo lo que pienso que de estos niños que están ahorita yendo a la escuela, como todos esos que tienen su permiso, que sigan ahí, que sigan estudiando, que ellos no den caso con la gente que dice pues vamos a hacer huelga, no que estudien, que se dediquen a estudiar, mientras que los dejen, que aprovechen, que eso es todo.*

But she says the young people who can go to school now should study hard, and take advantage of the opportunities her family helped them win.

[*Music*]

Stephen Smith: That's producer Catherine Winter.

The Lopezes and the Alvarezes were able to become citizens because of law signed by Ronald Reagan in 1986 that allowed nearly three million unauthorized immigrants to fix their status. It's much harder now.

The families in Tyler won the right for children to go to school - but not for them to go on to become citizens - and not for them to go on to college. The Plyler case has never been extended beyond 12th grade: Unlike K-12 schools, colleges don't have to admit undocumented students or offer them the same tuition rates as citizens.

But the case created a new generation of immigrants who know America from the inside, who speak English, and who want the same shot at the American Dream that their classmates have. The case set in motion the movement we see today - young, undocumented immigrants pushing for the right to live and work in the United states, and to go to college.

Coming up, the rise of the Dreamer movement - and the backlash against it:

Lizbeth Mateo: I knew I was going to be graduating and I didn't want my degree to, like, be completely worthless.

Ruthie Hendrycks: They shouldn't be our country to begin with, much less in our colleges competing with our American students.

Smith: This is Shadow Class: College Dreamers in Trump's America, a documentary from APM Reports, I'm Stephen Smith.

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Support for APM reports comes from Lumina Foundation and the Spencer Foundation.

We'll have more in a moment. This is APM, American Public Media.

Segment 2:

This hour, we're looking at the rise of the Dreamer movement and the clash with the new Trump administration.

Back in the '70s, when immigrants came to Tyler, Texas to tend roses, migrant workers still commonly returned to their families across the border in Mexico.

But as the U.S. economy grew in the 1990s, migration patterns began to change.

Roberto Gonzales: Instead of risking a difficult, a dangerous and a costly trip multiple times, they brought their families with them.

Roberto Gonzales is an assistant professor at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education and an expert on undocumented students.

Gonzales: And so what we see in the late 1980s and accelerating through the 1990s is a growing number of undocumented immigrants who have become permanent settlers and a large and growing number of children who...will be schooled in US schools without immigration status.

Because of the Plyler case, those undocumented young people would come of age, armed with high school diplomas and fluent English. They were much more educated than their parents. But Gonzales says when they tried to enter the working world, they discovered that without social security numbers, they were often stuck doing the same kinds of under-the-table manual labor their parents did.

Gonzales: Many of them didn't adjust well to jobs where they could be fired, for example, for asking to use the restroom, where they were berated by their employers, where employers often referred to them by derogatory names, where they didn't have the kinds of rights that they had grown up believing that they had.

If they wanted better opportunities, like the ability to work legally and go to college, they'd have to fight for them.

It became known as the “Dreamer” movement.

Producer Sasha Aslanian continues our story.

Sasha Aslanian: One of those children who crossed the border from Mexico during the boom time of the late 1990s was Lizbeth Mateo. Her family contemplated having her father go alone and send money back, but the family didn't want to be separated. In 1998, Lizbeth was 14 years old. She'd just finished middle school in Oaxaca, Mexico. She felt overwhelmed walking into high school in Los Angeles.

Mateo: I couldn't really communicate with anyone, so it was really difficult. I remember like crying the first few days and I remember like telling my mom, “I want to go back to Oaxaca, I don't want to stay here.”

Lizbeth eventually made friends and settled in. She would go from someone who didn't want to stay, to someone who would take great risks to stay.

She wanted to live in America and she wanted to go to college.

[*Music*]

Two years before Lizbeth arrived in the United States, Congress passed a law that prohibits states from offering higher education benefits such as in-state tuition, to undocumented

residents, unless they offer the same benefits to U.S. citizens from other states. That law still stands but some states have found ways to offer in-state tuition to undocumented students anyway. California was one of the first, so when Lizbeth graduated from high school in 2002, she could afford to go to community college.

Mateo: I think it was my first semester, a student that used to sit behind me in our political science class, she asked me to sign a petition for The DREAM Act and she explained to me what the DREAM Act was.

U.S. Senator Dick Durbin's DREAM Act - the one that would provide a path to citizenship for young people.

Mateo: I didn't tell her right away that I was undocumented but I signed the petition and asked for a few more copies. I went to Staples, I made 500 copies of the petition. I went to work I used to work in Venice Beach on the boardwalk and so I stood on the boardwalk and I asked everyone that was passing by to sign a petition. And I think within less than a week I had about 500 signatures.

Mateo brought her stack of petitions to a student meeting, and announced to the group she was undocumented.

[*Music*]

While Mateo was in the early days of organizing, William Perez was interviewing members of the first undocumented student organization at UCLA.

Perez is an associate professor at Claremont Graduate University in California. He studies immigrant students and academic achievement.

William Perez: They were so afraid that somebody would find out there were all these undocumented coming together at one place and would call immigration. I vividly remember the story of a student that we were interviewing and she said, you know, ‘We wouldn’t send out the location of the meeting until right before the meeting and so everyone got a text, and said ‘this is where we’re meeting’ so there was this whole concern about, you know, being secretive.

[*Music*]

But living in the shadows like their parents didn’t feel like an option either.

Cristina Jimenez came to New York City from Ecuador with her family when she was 13.

Cristina Jimenez: I realized that both like my dad and my mom were being exploited because of their status and so I had a couple of moments where I was trying to help my dad regain some wages from an employer but felt completely disempowered by the experience of not being able to call the police or you know like anyone to hold accountability on the employer because we were undocumented, and that was sort of for me was the first experience of deep injustice but I didn’t know what to do with it. I was 14.

By the time she’d been here a few years, Cristina had some ideas about how to fight injustice. She remembers when her high school counselor told her she couldn’t go to college because she didn’t have a social security number. Cristina responded that her parents paid taxes. The

counselor still said she couldn't go. Cristina joined the effort to push New York to allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition. In 2002, the effort succeeded.

Cristina: Which for me was what allowed me to be able to go to college.

Cristina Jimenez went on to co-found United We Dream, a national network of immigrant youth that works to expand access to higher ed and to stop the deportations of undocumented youth and their parents.

[*Music*]

Back on the West Coast, Lizbeth Mateo - who had stood on the boardwalk with her petitions - was feeling the same urgency. In an echo of the early gay rights movement, undocumented students began "coming out," giving visibility to the movement and gaining strength in numbers.

Mateo: It wasn't I think until 2007 that I began to really tell just anyone and everyone--including the media-- that I, that I was undocumented. And I think it was out of necessity and also the fact that I knew I was going to be graduating and I didn't want my degree to, like, be completely worthless.

Dreamers needed the right to work legally. And they also wanted to fight deportations which had been growing under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

Mateo: We started doing campaigns to stop the deportations of undocumented youth and we realized that we were effective at doing them....so I think we realized that we had the power to - to stop our own deportations.

But nearly a decade after The DREAM Act was first been introduced, it still hadn't passed.

Jimenez, in New York, remembers Dreamers across the country were mobilizing.

Jimenez: We were all in a coordinated plan to escalate even though many of the tactics were not necessarily you know, like, shared or agreed by everybody.

A small group that included Mateo traveled to Tucson, Arizona to try a bold new tactic.

TV news: Protesters stirring things up in downtown Tucson at this hour. This is a live picture...

On May 17, 2010, they held a sit-in in Arizona Republican Senator John McCain's office in Tucson.

Mateo: Well, it was the first act of civil disobedience by undocumented people, ever, as far as we know.

TV news: Inside, 5 protestors, all reportedly illegal immigrants are refusing to leave, demanding that the Senator support The DREAM Act.

McCain had been a co-sponsor of The DREAM Act in 2007, but he pulled back his support as he mounted his presidential campaign in 2008.

The activists sat on his office floor, dressed in graduation caps and gowns.

Mateo: We were there for about seven hours, seven or eight hours. I mean, they were nice. They were not mean at all, they were kind of nice.

McCain was in Washington that day. Outside his office in Tucson, a crowd gathered, and TV cameras hovered. It was an irresistible media story: here were unauthorized immigrants provoking the confrontation they'd tried all their lives to avoid; deliberately risking getting arrested. In fact, they actually wanted to be arrested, so they could be sent to detention centers and organize the undocumented people inside. But Mateo says it turned out not to be so easy.

Mateo: I mean the police didn't want to arrest us. They tried really hard to convince us not to get arrested. We thought we'd get arrested right away and we ended up sitting there for like eight hours.

Finally, when the office closed, four of them were arrested for trespassing and loaded into police vans.

TV news: There they go! Alright (*crowd cheers*)

Mateo smiled and waved to the crowd.

Mateo: I mean I was waving because I was very happy to see everyone and I think I wanted my family also to see that everything was going to be OK.

Mateo and two other protesters were turned over to Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, but they were let go. They never made it into the detention center.

The story was picked up by the national media. William Perez, the professor at Claremont who's followed the movement, says the risk paid off.

Perez: It made them realize about the power that they have. You know, that they realized "Wow, the media's on our side." And the fact that the media's on their side, it makes it so that these politicians and Homeland Security and ICE and all these folks, it's like a check on their power and their ability to just deport them or put them in a detention center. ... That was a spark that made people realize "We can do this and the more that we do it, the more powerful we get."

There's long been a Hispanic and Latino civil rights movement in the United States, particularly around labor rights, but this youth-led movement was different.

Mark Krikorian: The Dreamers see America from the inside.

Mark Krikorian leads the Center for Immigration Studies, a think tank in Washington DC. Krikorian wants to see tighter controls on immigration - both legal and illegal. He's an opponent, but he thinks Dreamers were clever in getting their message out.

Krikorian. The things that really sticks in my head, they were able to come up with stunts that people - even people who don't agree with them - chuckle at. They did this thing called the "undocubus."

The undocubus was an vintage tour bus nicknamed "Priscilla" painted with migratory butterflies and the words "No Papers, No Fear."

Krikorian: And that's not something that a Salvadoran, you know, Marxist Labor organizer ever would have thought of.

But the prize young immigrants were seeking, a path to citizenship, was denied when the DREAM Act failed in the Senate in 2010. Cristina Jimenez of United We Dream says they had to make a strategic decision.

Jimenez: We thought about a demand of you know for President Obama to stop deporting young people and DACA was won as a result of that.

President Obama: Effective immediately, the Department of Homeland Security is taking steps to lift the shadow of deportation from these young people.

Jimenez: So 2012 when the President announced the program, it wasn't like he did it out of his own goodwill, we had to push him really hard and organize almost a two-year campaign to get him there.

Obama: It is the right thing to do!

Polls suggested a majority of Americans agreed that people brought to this country as children should be allowed to stay. Even Krikorian is sympathetic. He'd agree to letting some young people stay, if he believed it would end there - and wouldn't expand to include their parents.

Krikorian says the Dreamers' strong push stirred up opponents.

Krikorian: It was all or nothing, our way or the highway, and guess what? That's how you get Trump.

Krikorian says anti-immigration activists felt like no one was listening to them. But Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump promised to build a wall, increase deportations and rescind DACA. Here's how he put it at a campaign rally in Phoenix in August of 2016.

Trump: Cancel unconstitutional executive orders and enforce all immigration laws!

[*applause*]

[*Sound of crying*]

The day after Trump won the presidential election, undocumented students around the country tried to make sense of the changed landscape. I went to Minneapolis Community and Technical College where an undocumented student organization offered space for students to drop-in. For them, the election felt like an eviction notice delivered overnight by neighbors they'd known all their lives.

Julio Martinez: My parents were crying and it's very upsetting.

Woman 1: Like I feel like all of this work that I've done is just going down. Like I worked so hard to be here and it's like, it could be gone in like one second.

Woman 2: And like I'm not scared that he like won. I'm scared of what's going to come after it. Like that hate that people have.

Within hours they'd organized a community "know your rights" training and gotten in touch with churches planning safe houses to protect them from immigration raids.

Ruthie Hendrycks: Holy moly folks!

A hundred miles away, in a small town in southern Minnesota, Trump supporter Ruthie Hendrycks was celebrating Trump's win on her weekly internet radio show about illegal immigration.

Hendrycks: [*Chuckling*] Things are really just - President Trump has not been in office for a week. Tomorrow will be a week. He has been in office for six days and things are already shaking, rattling and rolling. It's good, good news, good news!

Hendrycks created this radio show because she felt like people who shared her feelings about immigration needed a voice. She says the mainstream media ignored them.

She tells me about the time her group, Minnesotans Seeking Immigration Reform, announced a protest at the Mexican Consulate in St. Paul.

Hendrycks: Twenty-five of us calling the media to come cover our rally. Not one would show up. It, you know, I don't know if it's more demoralizing to those of us that were in attendance, or if it just added fury.

The dismissal burned in Hendrycks and her compatriots. Trump's victory was a sweet comeuppance. When Trump agreed to rescind DACA eight months into his term, Hendrycks was grateful that he'd fulfilled what she saw as a key campaign promise. She hopes Congress fails again to pass legislation protecting the young people covered under DACA, so they can be deported.

[*Music*]

Stephen Smith: I'm Stephen Smith. You're listening to Shadow Class: College Dreamers in Trump's America, a documentary from APM Reports.

The big immigration battle is at the federal level - but states have a lot of leeway when it comes to how to treat immigrant students. Students can't get federal money, but some states offer financial aid. At the other end of the spectrum are states that create barriers for undocumented students, such as requiring them to pay out-of state tuition.

Georgia has some of the tightest restrictions.

Undocumented students can't enroll in its three top public universities, and they pay non-resident tuition at all of the rest. The measures are effective at blocking undocumented people from enrolling. Twenty-four thousand people in Georgia have DACA - but in the fall of 2016, only 428 undocumented students were enrolled in the University System of Georgia.

Immigrants are suing over these rules. Advocates for immigrants say the rules remind them of the days of Jim Crow - and racially segregated public schools. Defenders of the policies say unauthorized immigrants shouldn't take seats or resources away from Georgia residents who are citizens. Sasha Aslanian takes us to Atlanta.

Sasha Aslanian: Arturo Martinez is home after a day working construction with his dad.

Five years ago, when he graduated from high school, this wasn't where he saw himself.

Arturo Martinez: Senior year, you know, I had a lot of friends who, during the finals, they would be excited to show off their acceptance letters, talking about college,

where they were going to go. And they would ask me, “Why are you not going to college? I mean, you’re so smart you can go to, you know, Georgia Tech or UGA.”

Martinez wanted to attend the University of Georgia or Georgia Tech to study computer science. But he couldn’t.

Martinez crossed the border illegally from Mexico with his family when he was eight. He can attend some Georgia colleges. But he’d still have to pay nonresident tuition. At Georgia State University for example, instead of paying \$4,000 a year, he’d have to pay \$13,000.

Martinez: I can’t afford, even if I had two jobs.

As he watched his friends go off to college, Martinez grew depressed.

Then he found out about something called Freedom University.

Cindy Lutenbacher: Alright, make your small groups of whatever size.

On Sunday nights, about forty students take courses from visiting professors who volunteer their time. Students don’t pay, but there’s also no credit. To visit Freedom University, I had to promise not to reveal where they meet in Atlanta.

Freedom U is inspired by southern Freedom schools from the civil rights era of the 1950s and ’60s. White college students from the north established temporary schools for local black children as part of the overall push for legal and social equality. Today’s Freedom U provides help with college applications and scholarships and offers college-level courses.

Tonight an English professor from Morehouse College named Cindy Lutenbacher, is teaching a poetry class.

Lutenbacher: That's a beautiful statement! You know when we become hard rock and so forth, that's when we're most vulnerable (Students: Yes!) That's when we break.

Freedom U has one paid employee, Emiko Soltis.

Emiko Soltis: Basically, the provost and the janitor of Freedom U. [*Laughs*]

Soltis has a PhD in human rights and social movements, and a history of being what she calls "a troublemaker." She was arrested for standing up for the rights of cafeteria workers when she was a grad student at Emory University.

In addition to running the school, Soltis takes Freedom U students on college tours in other states.

Soltis: So many times it's the first time they actually believe that they can go to college. And this ban has now been in place for seven years. And we have an entire generation of young people in Georgia who, since they were in middle school - now grade school soon - thought college was not a possibility and they gave up.

One Freedom U student who took a campus tour was Valentina Garcia Gonzalez - the student who's now at Dartmouth.

Valentina Garcia Gonzalez: That was one of the first times I've ever been on a campus. I kept thinking why is this not me? Why am I not here? Why can't I be here?

A half century ago, another group of young people was asking those same questions.

Charles Black: There was no college in Miami that I could attend because of my race. None.

Charles Black grew up in Florida. In 1958 he came to Atlanta to attend Morehouse, a historically black college. Black was an early leader of the Atlanta Student Movement which challenged legal segregation in the south.

Charles Black: It was illegal for blacks and whites to sit together in a place of public assembly. You couldn't use the same taxi cabs. The hospital...had separate ambulances for blacks and whites....I mean all these things were the law. You know? Just like this is the law now that we are fighting against.

Today Black's a board member at Freedom U. He teaches undocumented students the same civil disobedience tactics his generation used to topple Jim Crow.

[*Meeting sound*]

Freedom U's main target is the Georgia Board of Regents.

Board Chair: Good morning, at this time I'd like to call the Board of Regents meeting to order.

At a meeting in February that happened to fall on Valentine's Day, about a dozen Freedom U students and supporters dressed in business casual took seats in the audience.

A few minutes into the meeting, the students began handing the Regents carnations and handwritten valentines asking them to remove the tuition and admission restrictions for undocumented students.

The Regents were whisked from the room, carnations littered the floor and an officer with the state patrol approached the protesters.

Officer: If you do not disperse immediately, you will be arrested. Your choice.

The protesters filed out. In previous years, Freedom U students with DACA could risk getting arrested on a misdemeanor trespassing charge and it wouldn't be enough to get them deported. Now, the risk seems bigger. Within his first week, President Trump signed an executive order prioritizing removal of people convicted of any criminal offense.

It's high time the U.S. enforce its laws, says D.A. King. King's a Trump supporter who opposes Freedom U's activities. He left me this voicemail the day Trump took office.

Voicemail from D.A. King: I just watched the inauguration alone in my home office. I got a little bit choked up.

King runs a group that wants to make Georgia the least hospitable state in the country for unauthorized immigrants.

King was appalled by Obama's handling of immigration. As far as he was concerned, Obama couldn't leave the White House fast enough.

Voicemail from King: Today was a very very moving day for me and this old marine has never ever been so happy to see a helicopter take off as I was about 10 minutes ago. See ya. Bye.

I meet King at the Georgia State Capitol a month later to follow him as he makes his rounds.

King's a frequent visitor-to weigh in on immigration issues. Today he walks through the metal detector carrying a letter.

King: I'm going to take this and deliver it at Governor Deal's office and ask for a 10-minute meeting. I'm also going to ask that I be given hair. The odds of either one of those happening are about the same.

King is bald and he's right, he doesn't get the meeting. But he's persistent, and he's been on the winning side a good share of the time. He's at home at the capitol. He visits with staff in various offices. He promises tacos to the aide of one of his senate allies.

King: Donna does me a lot of favors....this is like a two-taco favor and then when I go by Taqueria del Sol, then I deliver tacos.

Donna: He does!

He charms her into letting us use a conference room for our interview.

What motivates King is a sense of moral indignation that people are coming and taking something that's not theirs.

King: For the first 10 years that I did this, people started coming to me instead of to our congressman and telling me that their kid couldn't get hired at McDonald's in Gainesville, Georgia because they didn't speak Spanish or small business owners...would come to me and say, "D.A., I lost my business because my competition is hiring black market labor...." I can see that jobs, benefits and services are going to people illegally when we can't take care of our own. We have homeless vets but I have to hear people whining about an illegal alien not getting X. It doesn't wash with me and I think given a fair presentation, it doesn't wash with most Americans.

King feels a certain amount of sympathy for kids brought to the U.S. as children who grow up in a country where they don't have legal status, but he doesn't think their situation is comparable to the African-American people who faced Jim Crow laws.

King: When I lived in Montgomery, Alabama when I was 8 years old, I saw colored-only bathrooms and water fountains and I remember crying when I realized what was going on....For people to take the struggle of black Americans to obtain their constitutional rights and compare it to illegal aliens demanding amnesty and access to America that they do not deserve or nor have they earned makes me sick to my stomach.

But Freedom U supporters say undocumented immigrants do have constitutional rights. As the U.S. Supreme Court found in the Plyler case, they are entitled to equal protection under the 14th amendment. That's the basis for a lawsuit Freedom U and The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund are bringing against the Georgia Board of Regents and the state's university presidents.

One of the plaintiffs is Arturo Martinez, the young man working construction with his dad because he couldn't afford to study computer science.

In a room off the kitchen that looks like a broom closet, Arturo shows me where he does graphic design work - and plays video games - on three computer monitors.

Martinez: I built the whole computer so every piece that you see right there was put together. Basically, my routine, come in from work with my dad doing construction this is where I free myself.

Martinez got some good news recently when he checked his email on his home-built computer. He learned he had won a private scholarship for students who live in the 15 states that either charge out-of-state tuition or have other restrictions for undocumented students.

Five years after graduating from high school, he'll attend Eastern Connecticut State University.

Martinez: I went to my dad and told him, "You know, I think I'm going to college and he got up and started jumping out of happiness and we started hugging each other.

It was victory for the Martinez family, but instead of being a few miles from home, Arturo will be a thousand miles away.

It's a migration Freedom University civil-rights veteran Charles Black says harkens back to the segregation era.

Black: The brightest blacks of two or three generations ago had to go to the northeast to get good educations in colleges and universities. Those folk could have been here in the South, making major contributions for the South. And we're continuing that same pattern of running people away who could be a major resource for the South.

[*Music*]

Stephen Smith: That story from producer Sasha Aslanian.

You're listening to an APM Reports documentary. I'm Stephen Smith.

We caught up with Arturo Martinez again after the announcement about the end of DACA. He says he's worried about what he'll do for money if he can't work legally. But he plans to stay in school. He won't lose his scholarship.

Most of the young people we spoke with say they'll still try to finish their degrees. But some are weary of the barriers in their way.

When we first met Estefania Navarro, she was studying computer forensics at a Minneapolis community college. She figured with that degree, she'd still be able to find work if she was deported to Mexico. But after Donald Trump's election, she switched her major to community development so she could help lift families like hers:

Estefania Navarro: They don't want you to dream, they don't want people like me to dream, they just want working hands, and so me doing something that I love...I think that's my resistance. That's my way of saying "Screw you, Trump" here's an undocumented brown woman still fighting.

But when we checked with Estefania a few months later, after the Trump administration announced the end of DACA, she told us she's taking a break from college. She said it's hard to make plans with so much uncertainty. She doesn't want to take on debt for a degree she might not finish, and might not be able to use.

[*Music*]

Smith: You've been listening to *Shadow Class: College Dreamers in Trump's America*, a documentary from APM Reports. It was produced by Sasha Aslanian and Catherine Winter with help from Josie Fan, Josh Marcus and Jeffrey Bissoy-Mattis. It was edited by Catherine Winter, Emily Hanford and me, Stephen Smith. The fact-checker is Eva Dasher. The web producer, Andy Kruse. Mixing by Craig Thorson. Music help from Liz Lyon. The APM Reports team includes Editor-in-Chief Chris Worthington and associate producer Suzanne Pekow.

We have more about this story on our website, [APM Reports.org](https://www.apmreports.org). You can see how states compare when it comes to policies on undocumented students in higher education.

"Shadow Class" is one of four programs in our new season of education documentaries. You can get them all by subscribing to our podcast, *Educate*. Find out how at [Educatepodcast.org](https://www.educatepodcast.org). We'd like to know what you thought about this program so send us an email at contact@apmreports.org.

Support for this program comes from Lumina Foundation and the Spencer Foundation. This is APM, American Public Media.