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DACA Decision Delights: But Dreamers Still Need Protection

By Sue Weishar, Ph.D.

JSRI Future Activities

July 31

Dr. Nik Mitchell will be leaving JSRI to begin a teaching position at Kansas State University.

JSRI is deeply grateful to Dr. Mitchell for his years of work with us and wishes him success in his new endeavor.

JSRI staff and associates—working from home—will continue monitoring local, state, and federal administrative, legislative, and judicial actions regarding our priority issues and the impact of Covid-19; participating in advocacy communications with authorities; recommending resources on our website and by social media; research and writing for our publications; and activating our advocacy network as appropriate.

JSRI Recent Activities

July 1

Deacon Chris Kellerman, SJ, began working for JSRI as a Visiting Fellow.

July 10

Dr. Sue Weishar participated in the first meeting of the Louisiana Stop Solitary Coalition Sub-Committee on Jails via Zoom.

July 10

Dr. Nik Mitchell attended the Louisiana State Board of Secondary and Elementary Education meeting regarding school reopenings.

July 15

Fr. Fred Kammer, SJ, did a presentation for the Jesuit novices of the Central and Southern Province on “Jesuit Justice” and Catholic Social Thought.

July 15

Dr. Weishar met with a member of Senator John Kennedy's staff to advocate for humane and just asylum policies in a Zoom meeting organized by the Interfaith Immigration Coalition.

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“Words can hardly express the joy and relief I am feeling now knowing that the DACA program will continue,” was the reaction DACA recipient and recent Loyola College of Law graduate Cinthia Padilla-Ortiz had upon learning of the June 18 U.S. Supreme Court decision on DACA. That morning, in a stunning 5-4 ruling, SCOTUS concluded that the Trump Administration had improperly tried to end Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and that the program, which protects about 700,000 young immigrants from deportation, would remain in effect. Ms. Padilla-Ortiz had a lot riding on the DACA decision as she requires a work permit, which DACA makes possible to undocumented immigrant youth, to take the bar exam later this year.



The SCOTUS decision came as a shock to most immigrant advocates, and is a testament to the courage of young immigrants like Padilla-Ortiz willing to share their stories and organize, march, and protest for what they believe in. Perhaps it takes people who have never been able to take their standing as Americans for granted to remind us of the core values that have pushed and prodded our country towards a “more perfect union” since its inception.

The following comments Cinthia provided for the Loyola press release on the DACA decision shows this faith:

I am American. The American way and the American educational curriculum are the only ones I have known since being brought to the U.S. from Mexico as a one year-old. I deeply love and respect American ideals and values of justice, liberty, and equality for all. I am immensely proud of my Mexican heritage; but the country that I love, hope to serve, and give my loyalty to is the United States. I am grateful for having the opportunity to be educated as an American, and now, as an adult, I want to serve my country with my legal and advocacy skills and help meet the needs of our local community of New Orleans, our state, and our country.

Attorney Salvador Longoria, a double Loyola alumnus and former JSRI Board Member who came to the U.S. as a refugee from Cuba, understands how important DACA has been to young Dreamers, and the contributions immigrants make to American life. Here is his reaction to the DACA decision:

I came to this country as a four-year-old. I did all of my schooling here in New Orleans parochial schools. I was then fortunate enough to graduate from Loyola and then Loyola Law School. But, were it not for a special status that had been carved out for immigrants/exiles arriving from Cuba in the 1960s, I could be a Dreamer. The thought that I could then be sent back to another country I barely know after living and succeeding here all my life and into adulthood is unfair and horrific. DACA recipients are Americans, and they have contributed immensely to the communities where they live. Their culture, careers, families, and successes are American; and they should be embraced and lifted up for their hard work, educational excellence, and determination. These Dreamers who came to the United States as children know only one country as theirs, the U.S. They represent the highest ideals of what it means to be a nation of immigrants.

It is way past time that Congress create legislation to provide a path to citizenship for Dreamers. The House has already passed a bill that would do this, now the Senate must act. Click [here](#) to request that your U.S. Senators* Support a “clean” Dream Act now!

*If you are registered to vote in states other than LA, MS, AL, FL, and TX, then please contact your U.S. Senator directly via [this link](#).

Monthly articles reflect the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of Loyola University New Orleans.

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