

The Federal Government's approach to mental health has been a chaotic patchwork of antiquated programs and ineffective policies spread across numerous bureaucratic agencies that simply don't get to the issue at hand, and I think we can all see that.

Sadly, many patients end up in the criminal justice system or are on the street because services are unavailable. I know that in the State that I reside in, the great State of Pennsylvania, years back, we closed our State hospitals where much of the care was given to these people, and they just ended up out on the street or back with their families, which often are cases that their families just don't know what to do. They don't know how to handle it. They can't handle it.

Then these folks end up in the penal system, which is no place for people that justifiably are sick. They have an issue. They are sick. They are not criminals, but they are sick.

In the worst case scenarios, some individuals commit acts of violence. And every one of us has heard the stories and seen the film footage on the news of these acts of violence that can be directly attributable to mental illness.

Now, we should be able to feel safe in our homes, all of us, in our communities, and our hearts just break every single time a senseless act of violence occurs and we see that. And certainly, for parents, these tragedies, they hit especially close to home.

We need to remember that the beneficiaries of mental health treatment aren't only those directly treated for mental illness, but also our broader community when we see those things, those images on TV, because mental health treatment is a preventive measure to reducing acts of violence. It is a preventive measure. It actually stops those things from ever occurring if we get to it.

Now, I was an enthusiastic supporter and cosponsor of my colleague Congressman TIM MURPHY's Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act. He literally worked on it for years, and I watched him struggle through that. And that bill was actually included in the 21st Century Cures Act, which passed this very House last night.

This legislation coordinates programs across different agencies, those disparate agencies that don't seem to work with one another, where information is siloed. It coordinates that, those programs, and promotes effective evidence-based programs, evidence-based so we can get to solutions.

Just like most other things with the Federal Government, by removing Federal barriers to care, advancing early intervention programs, adding alternatives to institutionalization, and improving the transition from one level of care to another, we directly address our Nation's broken mental health care system, finally. Finally, a step in the right direction.

So, once again, I applaud and thank the gentleman from Oklahoma for al-

lowing me this time and bringing this issue to the floor; and I urge my colleagues in the Senate to send this bill directly to the President's desk, absolutely, as soon as possible. We can't wait for another tragedy to occur where we are all watching on television the footage of something that could have been prevented and avoided.

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Pennsylvania for also being extremely passionate about moving in the right direction with mental health. It is something that we continue to look over.

As I stated when we first started tonight, we had an overwhelming amount of bipartisan support on passing the 21st Century Cures Act. We could see that the hard work that the staff over in the Energy and Commerce Committee, on both sides, the Republican staff and the Democratic staff, worked together to come up with a bipartisan bill to make sure that we are putting our families first, that we are putting our constituents first.

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We are setting aside the partisanship that often finds its way inside our conversations. We set it aside and actually were very proactive on a very important piece of legislation.

I would like to thank Chairman MURPHY, with his passion on mental health, and our outgoing chairman, Mr. FRED UPTON, who has dedicated his years of service to the betterment of our constituents and his passion for fighting this and seeing this through. I would like to thank him for his dedication. The gentleman will be missed as our chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I see no other speakers at this time. I yield back the balance of my time.

CELEBRATING THE DREAMERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'ROURKE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the stories of and celebrate the DREAMers who live in our communities, mine in El Paso, Texas, and nearly every single community across the great United States.

All together, we estimate there are close to 750,000 DREAMers in the United States. These are beneficiaries of an executive action under this President, known as the Deferred Action for

Childhood Arrivals, that ensured that young people in our communities who arrived in this country at a very early age, brought here by their parents from another country of origin, who are going to school, living by our laws, being productive and net contributors to their communities, and who, in some cases, strive to serve in the military or perform some other community or civic service, are able to reside in this country after they come forward voluntarily out of the shadows to give their personal information, their fingerprints, their contact information, their names, their addresses, and their telephone numbers, in other words, to register with the government so that we know who is in this country and satisfy some legitimate security concerns that we have when it comes to undocumented immigration. So these young DREAMers have satisfied those concerns by coming forward.

This temporary reprieve from deportation allows them to continue to live in our communities, to continue to be our neighbors, to continue to make this country great, and to make cities like El Paso the safe and wonderful communities that they are. It is no accident that El Paso has more than its fair share of DREAMers and also is the safest city not just along the U.S.-Mexico border, it is the safest city not just in the State of Texas, but it is the safest city in the United States today.

The urgency behind our actions today lies with the commitment from the President-elect to immediately terminate the current President's executive actions when it comes to these DREAMers. This commitment to terminate this action will also terminate any certainty these young people have. It will reduce the security of our communities when young people no longer feel comfortable approaching or working with law enforcement for fear of deportation; and it produces extreme anxiety and fear that I can only begin to imagine for myself or for my kids if I knew that I had given all of my personal identifiable information, including the address at which I reside, my telephone number, and the names of my parents, to the Federal Government which now may have a policy to immediately deport me back to the country of origin and, if I were, as a typical DREAMer might be, 20 years old and attending the University of Texas in El Paso, may have lived in El Paso for the majority of my life. I may have come over at the age of 3, and for the last 17 years, the only life I knew was in the United States; the only city I knew was in El Paso, Texas; the only language I spoke was English. I had no family, no connections, no place in my country of original origin, and I didn't speak the language. Then I would be unable to thrive.

I think for some of these young people, they question whether they will have the ability to survive. I think it is really that critical, and it is very important that we remind ourselves, the

rest of the country, and certainly our colleagues here in the House of the gravity of the situation.

Beyond the moral imperative, which I think is the most important, there is also an economic dynamic to this. The Department of Commerce estimates that the DREAMers, these 750,000-strong DREAMers who are contributing every single day in our communities, going to our high schools and making our country better, that over their lifetimes in the United States they will earn up to \$4 trillion of taxable income—taxable income that will allow the community they live in to flourish, to thrive, to enrich those that they hire and work with, and to add significantly to the Federal Treasury.

That is just one point in terms of the economic advantage of creating additional certainty and, at a minimum, not forcibly removing these DREAMers or terminating the protection under which they currently reside.

Before I yield to my colleagues to share their stories about the DREAMers in their communities—and, again, they are in every single State of the Union and almost every community in every one of those States—I thought I would share the story of one of the DREAMers that I met this Monday in El Paso, Texas, when I held a townhall on short notice, a few days' notice to my constituents over Facebook and Twitter and published in the newspaper.

More than 300 El Pasoans showed up to share their stories of how they came to this country and what they are now doing in our communities. What was even more impressive and poignant for me and many in the audience that night were the U.S. citizens in El Paso who showed up to stand in solidarity and in strength with these DREAMers and to let them know that, come what may, whatever executive actions are terminated, whatever necessary immigration reform laws are not enacted, that we as a community in El Paso, Texas, are going to stand with these DREAMers, make sure that they are successful, and make sure that they have nothing to fear going forward.

One of these DREAMers that had the courage to stand up and be counted on Monday night was Estefania Garcia Ruvalcaba. She is 17 years old. She arrived in the United States in El Paso, Texas, which has served as the Ellis Island for much of the Western Hemisphere, at the age of 3 years old. I ask you to tell me what 3-year-old understands concepts like citizenship or nationality.

She doesn't speak the Spanish language anymore that she barely knew at the age of 3. She only speaks English. She is a junior at Del Valle High School in El Paso. She is captain of the soccer team. She is on the student council. She is the press box manager, and so she is earning a little bit of money to be able to take home at the end of the day and help out; and she goes to every single football game to

be able to support the hometown and home high school team. On top of that, she runs on the cross-country team.

My 8-year-old daughter, Molly O'Rourke, has an example in Estefania. I want Molly to be able to do all those things. I am proud of Estefania. She is part of what makes El Paso such a wonderful place to live and what makes me so proud to represent the community and helps us, again, stay the safest city in America, bar none.

There are 750,000-plus Estefanias who have come forward to register with their government to make sure that we know that they are in our communities to defer the action that otherwise would deport them back to their countries of origin and to make this country successful.

At this time, I yield to a good friend and colleague from the great State of Texas, who understands these issues just as well as anyone, who has thousands of DREAMers in his community, and whom I am so grateful to for being here tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO).

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. I thank Congressman O'ROURKE. I thank the gentleman for all of his work on behalf of these DREAMers, these young students who were brought to the United States through no fault of their own. They have grown up here, many of them knowing no other life except an American life.

President Obama, during his term, was so good to issue an executive action known as DACA to give these folks who were in a legal limbo a chance to participate in American society. So many of them have gone on and are doing great things. DACA allows them to work, to go to school, and, most of all, to not have to live in fear, not have to live in fear of deportation.

As you mentioned, many of these folks are people who were brought here at the age of 3 or 5 or 9 and had no choice about coming. Some of them didn't even realize that they were not American citizens until they had to apply to college or try to get a driver's license or in some other way interact with the government.

There has been a lot of rhetoric over the past few years about immigrants. They have been called rapists, murderers, and criminals. There is so much of that kind of rhetoric that is used when people talk about the border, for example, and even the people that live in our border cities, whether it is El Paso or San Diego or McAllen, Texas. My wife is from the Rio Grande Valley, where you have a high concentration of DREAMers, for example. Sometimes, in all of that rhetoric and ugliness, there is a profound misunderstanding about who these people are. So I thank the gentleman for helping to highlight their stories and, really, for the country, to put a human face to these folks who are good people.

I will tell you, because I know other Members have stories of DREAMers in

their districts, just a quick story about somebody from San Antonio, a young man named Eric Balderas. His story was in the news in the last few years.

Eric was the valedictorian in 2009 of Highlands High School. He was number one in his class at Highlands High School, and he was on the academic decathlon team, student council, and even played varsity soccer. He also received a full scholarship to Harvard University.

While returning to Harvard in 2010 to complete summer research in molecular biology, Eric was detained at the San Antonio International Airport for traveling without acceptable identification. After efforts from Senator DURBIN and the Harvard University president, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services was able to grant him deferred action status. Eric's story, so far, has had a happy ending. He graduated from Harvard in 2013.

There have been other folks who have achieved just as much, who are productive members of our country and our society, but oftentimes they are maligned, and they are often misunderstood.

Right now, we are at a critical moment in our country's history. There is a question hanging over the Nation about how we will treat these DREAMers, these young students, these young people, again, who find themselves in legal limbo, who are as American as we are, and who have only known America as their homeland. There is a big question about what will happen with them.

The President-elect has talked about getting rid of DACA early on, perhaps on the first day in office. So, as I am sure you found, there is a lot of anxiety from these young people and also their families about what is going to happen to them. They have played by the rules; they are being productive; they are working hard; they are going to school; they are paying their taxes; and they are living as Americans.

This will be a real test for the Congress, for the President-elect, who, on January 20, will be the new President, and, really, for the Nation about what kind of nation we are. This really tugs at our conscience.

When we think about some of the rhetoric that has been used—some people call them criminals. They say that they broke the law. I think when I hear that, as an attorney, I think about the different legal standards that we apply in criminal cases. For example, there is something known as *mens rea*, state of mind. Often when you are charged with a crime, a jury or a judge asks: Did you intend to do what you did? Did you know what you were doing?

Even in our civil cases when we think about the negligence standard, there is still a question about whether somebody was indifferent to what they were doing. Well, in this case, these young people had no idea what was going on. They had no participation in even coming to the United States, but they find themselves here as Americans.

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I hope that our Nation and this Congress and the next President will be big enough, will be gracious enough, will respect their humanity, do the right thing, and make sure that they are protected under the law.

First of all, thank you for holding your town hall, which may have been the first one in this season after the election. We are going to have one in San Antonio on December 11, which is a Sunday, with State Representative Diego Bernal, who really helped organize it and spearhead it; Congressman LLOYD DOGGETT, who also represents part of San Antonio; State Senator Jose Menendez.

There are also other Members who I know are going to hold similar town halls in their cities. I will read off just a few of them because I think it is important to acknowledge that work:

PETE AGUILAR in San Bernardino, California; TONY CÁRDENAS in Los Angeles, California; RUBEN GALLEGOS in Phoenix, Arizona; RAÚL GRIJALVA in Tucson, Arizona; MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM in New Mexico; and RAUL RUIZ, who has a district in southern California. I know that there are others that are being scheduled.

I think all of this work is so important because when we talk about DACA, we are not talking about a piece of legislation that is going to take months to come through the House of Representatives and the Senate. This is something, a decision, that the new President on January 20 can make a decision to do away with it completely and to subject these kids to deportation, often to a country that they have never known, that they have no recollection of being a part of or growing up in. This really is a moral question, as you mentioned, for the country that pulls at our conscience.

Thank you for all your work.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I can't thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO) enough for taking the time to be here for his leadership on this issue. Not just after this election, and not just since he has been in the House of Representatives, but really his whole life has been exemplary in his advocacy for the most vulnerable amongst us in ensuring the truth about the story of these young people who come to our country.

It is not simply a matter of sympathy—although, I sympathize with their situation—it is also a matter of our self-interest as a country. As we continue to look for ways to become a stronger and better country, so much of that lies with those who have made the very difficult choice to come here and contribute to our success and contribute to the American Dream. I am grateful to you for continuing to advocate for them and to share those stories with the rest of the country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the State of Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), another very good friend from a State that has known its share

of amazing stories of immigration and seeing those immigrants flourish and become the best of us in this country.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman O'ROURKE for yielding and for organizing this critical Special Order.

Most importantly, thank you for your fierce advocacy for people of your district, for people of our country, for immigrants, and for DREAMers.

Let me begin by echoing your comments and that of our colleague, Mr. CASTRO's, as well. The stories that you both have shared underscore the urgency that we face in protecting these children and young adults from deportation under the next administration.

Tonight, right now, there are high school seniors across our country writing college essays, compiling recommendations, and filling out applications who are not sure if they will be allowed to stay in this country when it comes time to enroll in classes.

There are elementary and middle school students that are working diligently on their homework because, one day, they want to pursue a college education or work in their communities, but now they are not sure if that day will come.

There are young professionals working in our factories, teaching in our schools, volunteering in our neighborhoods, or even preparing to join the military that are going to sleep tonight worried that, when the calendar strikes 2017, the only life that they have ever known might be shattered.

All of these children, these young people, all 740,000 of them, they are our future. They put their trust in us, their government, in our promise to protect them if they stepped out of the shadows.

Today, that faith is frayed. It is our responsibility, all of ours, as this body, to commit to them that the only country that they know will not wash away their contributions, those that they have made, and send them to an unfamiliar land; because they believe in the American Dream just as our ancestors did and as we do today; because they are DREAMers; because they are our neighbors, our friends, our classmates, our community, and so much more; because they are countrymen.

Down this hallway in the Senate, a few of our Republican colleagues have already started on legislation to protect DACA beneficiaries. In order to lift the cloud of doubt for thousands in our country, fighting for their rights must be our priority today and every day until we succeed.

Congressman O'ROURKE, Congressman CASTRO, and my colleagues gathered here with us this evening, thank you for your work, thank you for your passion, thank you for your commitment. I know that we are on the right side of this fight when I see all of you standing here.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) for his eloquence on this

and for his empathy in allowing us to try to think about what it must feel like to be working on that finals paper or that homework assignment in high school or at community college or at one of our great universities and not know if at the start of next semester you will find yourself in another country, in a place that is now strange to you, with a language that you don't speak.

When we think about this, when we think about these mass deportations, literally using the information that these young people and their families came forward with to register under the DACA program, and then using that against them after they voluntarily came forward, to find out where they live, pick them up, process them, deport them back to their country of origin, beyond the incalculable emotional human psychological toll, beyond what that would do to the conscience of this country, look at what it would cost us in financial terms. We would lose 2 to 2.6 percent of our GDP. We would lose nearly \$5 trillion over the next 10 years, and government receipts on the trillions of dollars that these DREAMers would otherwise earn would also be gone with those DREAMers—nearly \$900 billion that we would lose from the United States Treasury.

We would lose young Americans like the one who is pictured next to me, David Gamez, who is now 20 years old and who joined us Monday at our town hall in El Paso, Texas, one of these brave young El Pasoans, young Americans, who had the courage to come forward, and shared with us at that town hall that he came to this country at the age of 10. He came from Mexico City. He immediately applied himself, learned English, rose to the top of the ranks in his high school classes, took AP courses, is now a member of the STEM club at the El Paso Community College, and is pursuing a career in electrical engineering. He is an artist, he loves to draw, he loves to paint, and he wants to be an innovator. His heroes are all American heroes. His heroes are Elon Musk, Bill Gates, and Larry Ellison, those people who are contributing to our country, creating jobs, innovating, creating, growing this economy. That is what David wants to do. That is what he will do if he is able to stay in this country.

I think it is so important for us to give David the certainty and, also at the same time, not to provoke anxiety and fear that will cause him to lose this opportunity, to lose his way, and for us to lose out on all the amazing things that he can create.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS), who I have the pleasure of sitting with on the Veterans' Affairs Committee and who, over the last 4 years, I have learned from because she is the most tireless champion for veterans. She is the most tireless champion for the LGBT community. She is often the most tireless champion for those who do not have a

voice in our system or whose voice is not loud enough. So it is up to Ms. TITUS to amplify that voice and become their advocate.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman O'Rourke for yielding. You are too kind in your compliments. I give them right back to you. We have worked together on many things, including veterans and public lands, and now this very pressing issue of what we can do to protect our DREAMers.

Since the election, my office has just been deluged by phone calls from the DACA recipients, those we call DREAMers, from their friends, and from their family. They are afraid. You can just hear the fear in their voice. They are just calling to ask questions: Will I be deported? Will my friends be deported? Will my family be separated? Will I lose my house? Will I lose my job? Will I lose my scholarship? Should I apply for DACA? Should I apply to renew DACA? Or should I just keep my head down and hope that they don't notice that I am here?

It just tears your heart out. That is one of the reasons that in my district, in Las Vegas, we held a round table, not a town hall. We started with those organizations who help DREAMers. We had Catholic charities; we had the university, UNLV; we had other institutions of higher education; we had the Latin Chamber; and we had the Mexican and the Salvadoran Consulate all gathered around the table because we don't know how to answer those questions. We wanted to be sure we were all on the same page, giving people the same advice, and reassuring them that whatever happens, we will be there for them. That helps a little, but still you want to be able to say: This is what you are facing.

I know I am not the only one getting these calls. They are coming from kitchens and living rooms and restaurants and stores and families all across this country, as you have heard from some of the other speakers here tonight. For our DREAMers and their families, this fear and anxiety will continue to grow. I am afraid they are just going to return to the shadows if we don't act soon to responsibly reform our immigration system.

Now, as yet, we have heard very little from the Trump transition team about what is actually going to happen to the DREAMers once President Obama leaves office.

Will they round up people and send them back? Will they build that wall?

We don't know. But what we do know is that Mr. SESSIONS has been appointed as Attorney General, who has a very long record of opposing comprehensive immigration reform, actually railing against it; and that is not a very good sign.

After months of just disgraceful campaign rhetoric speeches that denigrate immigrants, Trump and his team now have to really deal with the gravity of the situation. I would suggest, to begin with, they should acquaint themselves

with some of the young men and women who have been able to go to work, go to school, contribute to the tax base, contribute to society and our culture, like those that Mr. O'Rourke mentioned, because they had that protection of DACA.

Instead of demoralizing and degrading them, they should take the time to learn about people like Brenda Romero. Brenda is a young DREAMer who interned in my office this past summer. She is one of 12,000 DREAMers in Nevada. She is not a rapist and she is not a drug dealer. She is a high school graduate and the first immigrant to be the student body president of a small college in my home State. She is now pursuing a law degree.

Brenda was brought to the United States from Mexico when she was just 2 years old. Like so many of the over 700,000 DREAMers, she didn't really have any choice in that decision. She has had a choice about her life, and she has made the most of it, like so, so many DREAMers, including another dreamer from Las Vegas who many of you have seen on television, an amazing national spokeswoman for this campaign for DREAMers, Astrid Silva.

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They have contributed, and they inspire me. That is the reason I am joining the gentleman here tonight to talk about their stories, and they are the reason that I will continue to be on the front line—to fight to make this country a better place for them so they, in turn, can make it a better place for all of us.

I want you to go out and meet these people. I want you to sit down with them eye to eye. I call on all of my colleagues to do that. Hear their stories, and you will understand just how remarkable they are. They will make you feel very proud, and you will find that you have more in common with them and their families than you have apart.

We are not a country that should alienate immigrants. We are a country that is characterized by the Statue of Liberty: give me your tired, your poor, your hungry, those yearning to be free. Surely, we can't forget that kind of history and heritage that we have of welcoming immigrants with open arms. We are not a country that should be tearing families apart. As we stand here tonight on the floor of the House, I would just ask you to make that effort to get to know the DREAMers in your community. Hear their stories, and I think you will agree with me just how remarkable they are.

So I thank the gentleman for letting me speak. Count on me to continue this fight. I think, if we can't get comprehensive immigration reform done in the short term, let's at least protect those DREAMers who already have that status so that they don't have to live in fear.

Mr. O'Rourke. I thank the gentlewoman from Nevada for sharing these personal stories of the people in her

community who inspire her. It is these stories of courage that the gentlewoman just recounted and that I have been trying to share about the young DREAMers in my community of El Paso that were the impetus for our coming together this evening and sharing with our colleagues and the people of this country the truth about a group of very special young people who are too often misunderstood, if not outright maligned; so I am grateful to the gentlewoman for her efforts to improve our understanding of this very special group of people.

When I am thinking about these courageous, young people whom I have been introducing you to tonight from the city of El Paso who happen to have come to this country, to my city, from another country at a very tender age—be it 3, be it 5, be it 7 years old—now, as they are in their teens and in their early twenties, we find them to be flourishing and inspiring us.

I want to share a story that goes back a few generations as I introduce the next Member who will speak. That is the story of Mildred Parish Tutt, who in El Paso, Texas, in 1955, after having graduated from Douglass High School—a segregated, all-Black institution in my community of El Paso, Texas—had the audacity to apply for enrollment at Texas Western College, now known as the University of Texas at El Paso, and her application was rejected solely based on her race.

Mildred and her friend Thelma White and a few other students who were denied enrollment teamed up, and, with the help of the NAACP and an attorney named Thurgood Marshall, they took this issue and their aspiration and this case to a Federal court. Thanks to the wisdom and the judgment of our Federal judge at the time, R.E. Thomason, not only was it found that Texas Western's ban on African American students was unconstitutional, but his ruling and their effort and Mildred's courage effectively desegregated the institutions of higher learning in the State of Texas for every single Texan.

As I was sharing with some of our colleagues yesterday, as I was introducing my very good friend BARBARA LEE, this took incredible personal sacrifice. I can only imagine the difficulty that Mildred faced on that day; yet it was so incredibly important for this country. That is the kind of story that we are telling today about these, again, courageous, special young people in our midst whom we want to continue to allow to flourish.

I want to, at this time, yield to the gentlewoman from California, BARBARA LEE, who has her roots deeply in the State of Texas at El Paso.

Ms. LEE. I thank the gentleman very much.

First of all, I thank Congressman O'Rourke for lifting up my mother, who was a phenomenal woman, who passed away last year, and who broke many glass ceilings. I want to thank the gentleman for recognizing what a

true shero she was; so I just had to tell you. I want to thank the gentleman also for his tireless advocacy on behalf of my hometown and the place of my birth, El Paso, Texas, on so many fronts but especially on behalf of immigrants.

I grew up in an immigrant community. I can tell you my mother, my grandfather, my sisters, and my brothers-in-law—everybody from El Paso—consider the gentleman our Representative, so I thank him very much. We are very proud of him.

Mr. Speaker, I attended St. Joseph's Elementary School on Waco Avenue, and we were taught that we must value the dignity of all human beings. I was taught by the Sisters of Loretto in El Paso. So now, in representing the beautiful East Bay of northern California, my values and what I learned from my mother and my grandfather and my parents in El Paso really drive me to continue our fight on behalf of our young people, on behalf of our DREAMers.

Four years ago, President Obama made history by announcing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, DACA. This critical program provides—and this is just common-sense—humane protections for undocumented Americans, mind you, who were brought to our Nation as young children. Since the executive action, about 744,000 young people have benefited from this important program.

I am proud to say, though, that now one in three DREAMers in the United States is from my State of California. These are brilliant young people who deserve the chance to live the American Dream. DACA empowers young people and keeps families together even in the face of Republican inaction on comprehensive immigration reform.

This is an issue that is dear to my heart. As I said, I grew up in El Paso in an immigrant community; so I know no option. I mean, we have to protect our young people and keep families together. More than a quarter of the residents now in my congressional district were born outside of the United States. Tens of thousands of young people have benefited from the DACA program.

We sponsored a town meeting several weeks ago. Actually, it was sponsored by Oakland Community Organizations, which is an affiliate of PICO. It was an amazing town meeting. Everyone participated. It was multiracial. It was held in the Catholic cathedral. There are several stories I would like to share, just very quickly, that we heard that night.

One DREAMer and DACA recipient—let's call her Amy—was born in Venezuela and immigrated to the United States as a child. DACA opened doors for Amy. She received her bachelor's degree at UCLA and then went on to obtain her law degree. This is really impressive. Through her hard work, Amy became the first DACA recipient to be admitted to the California bar. I am so proud of Amy. She has taken her

skills and experiences to give back to our community. Today, she works at a nonprofit in the East Bay where she is an advocate for immigration reform and helps other young people benefit from the DACA program; but while she spends her days helping her community, she still lives in fear—in fear for her family, in fear for her friends, in fear of being deported at any moment.

I have another constituent—let's call him Gabriel—whom I met recently at the same event. Gabriel was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States 10 years ago. Since then, he has used his voice to empower his community and advocate for immigrants. In high school, he started a local DREAMers club that advocates for the inclusion and advancement of undocumented students. He went on to attend UC Berkeley and was able to receive funds to cover most of his studies. Through DACA and State policies, he was able to afford the high cost of living in the Bay Area and receive a world-class education.

He and Amy show the incredible potential of our Nation's young people. Their determination to live the American Dream, to receive a quality education, and to help their communities was really unlocked through DACA. It is terrible to think of the dreams that would be destroyed by rolling back DACA now.

Time and time again, I hear stories like Gabriel's and Amy's—stories of families who are kept together because of DACA and of young people who are able to attend college and pursue these dreams. Now these young people are afraid. They fear that their families will be torn apart, that their parents may be deported, and that their American Dreams are truly in jeopardy.

We have always been a nation of immigrants. This is a history that we should be proud of; but, right now, we know that immigrants in my district, in El Paso, and all across our Nation are scared to death about what this next administration will bring. There are families who wake up in fear that, come January 21, their work or their school will be raided. There are DREAMers who dread being forced to leave the country—the only country that they have ever known. This is morally wrong. The nuns who taught me at St. Joseph's would be shocked if they knew what was taking place now. We are better than this. These young people deserve better from our country, and they deserve better from this Congress.

Again, I am calling on my Republican colleagues to let us vote on bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform—legislation that will reunify families, that will grow our economy, and that will provide a clear pathway to citizenship. I know the gentleman and all of our colleagues are going to continue to fight for and to pass immigration reform and the DREAM Act; but, minimally, we have to protect our Nation's DREAMers, our immigrants, and all families.

I thank the gentleman again for his leadership. I thank him for inviting me to be with him tonight. Again, my family is very proud of him, our Congressman.

Mr. O'ROURKE. I thank the gentleman from California, and I thank her for continuing to cut the profile in courage in Congress and for her fierce advocacy on the issues that matter most. She continues to stand out as an example to me, and tonight is testimony to that; so I am grateful to her for being here.

I now want to yield to yet another good friend. It is an embarrassment of riches, in the Chamber this evening, to have so many talented Members who have decided to stand up with some of the best among us. In my opinion, the gentleman from Oregon, who in the 4 years that I have been here has taught me so much and much of that by example, is perfectly suited to share his experiences, those of the community he represents, and what he wants to see going forward for this great country.

I yield to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy in permitting me to speak this evening and for his thoughtfulness in organizing this conversation and inviting others of our colleagues to come forward.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is so important to be able to put a human face on an issue that sometimes gets lost in the rhetoric. We have had a lot of rhetoric this last year. The fears that were stoked by the campaign with harsh words about immigrants, people of different religions, people who would be at risk of deportation, to maybe having a registry, having denial based on people's religions or what their perceived religions might be has sent shock waves, but it is nothing compared to what I have experienced in the days immediately after the election.

People who were apprehensive and concerned are terrified—children unsure about whether parents will be there when they come home from school, people who are concerned about whether they will be able to have employment. It is not just people who may not have their documents in order. This touches millions of Americans who are part of extended families, who are part of families in the workplace.

I was honored to be part of a fundraising event 2 weeks ago that was hosted by Oregon's wine industry. We came together in a lavish fundraising dinner and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for the health care for the employees in their vineyards. Now, they are not asking about their documentation. They understand that there may be some who are questionable, but they are not seeking in terms of what people's histories are.

□ 1945

They have people here who have worked with them for years who are

like family and who are connected to the community. The notion of sending these young people back, who, as you and our other colleagues have pointed out, came here as children—they didn't have any choice. What 4-year-old, 3-year-old, 2-year-old infant is making this perilous journey on their own? They were brought here. They were raised here.

Many of these young people, as you have already had testimony this evening, have had amazing records of success. They took the United States Government and its President at his word and came forward and took a little bit of a risk because they wanted to be part of the fabric of this country. They are in this situation, sadly, because of a failure of will by my Republican friends in the House.

As the gentleman knows, he was here when we had an opportunity to vote on comprehensive immigration reform that passed the Senate on a bipartisan basis. It wasn't a great bill, but it was an important step forward, on a bipartisan basis, that would have prevented some of this confusion, some of this pain, and some of this uncertainty.

If the Republican leadership had allowed it to come to the floor for a vote, they wouldn't have had to twist any arms. There would have been more than enough votes on both sides of the aisle to enact it. That failure of courage stoked part of this hateful campaign that we have all experienced and has kept these unfortunate people and their families and friends—whether they are citizens, employees, they're part of the community—under a cloud.

This is a failure of the House of Representatives that has created this situation. We should not, as a country, compound it by raising the specter of decent, hardworking, young people who are here through no act of their own, who have taken a step forward, a little risk to try and integrate into our society, who are high performing.

I could give examples tonight of a young man who is completing his dental studies at the Oregon Health & Science University, a DREAMer who dreams big about serving his community as a professional dealing with dental health. There is a young woman who is a human resource professional at the largest school district in our State, who isn't just adding her competence, but is being able to provide opportunities to deal with some of the real serious human resource questions from first-line experience. We could all do this if we tried.

Representative O'ROURKE, I deeply appreciate your bringing this forward. I think it would be a tragedy if we were to punish people who took the President at his word, who put confidence in this Congress, to unwind this unfortunate situation. But I think it is important that all of us add our voices, that we connect with the people at home who are desperate, apprehensive, and vulnerable, to be able to make sure the American public knows what is at

stake; because if we add our voices, our examples, and engage them, there is no doubt in my mind that there will be enough public pressure to prevent a tragedy of immense proportions.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I am so grateful to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) and could not agree more forcefully with his words. In addition to these, again, inspiring examples of what the DREAMers mean to us as a country and what they mean to the gentleman personally, I also enjoyed hearing about how the community he represents is rallying around them and supporting them and ensuring that they know that they are not alone, despite the rhetoric, despite the changes that we might see in executive actions going forward.

I am also deeply appreciative of the gentleman's reminder that it is this institution that really has the opportunity, the responsibility, and the power to correct this. In these 4 years that I have had the pleasure of joining you here in the House, I know that both of us and dozens of our colleagues have tried mightily to do that, but, unfortunately, to no avail. That does not in any way dampen my enthusiasm to do this. In fact, these stories that we are sharing tonight only cause me to want to redouble my efforts and work with you and our colleagues to make sure that we do everything we can and, beyond that, that we are ultimately effective and successful in setting this country, when it comes to our immigration laws and it comes to the lives of these 750,000 DREAMers, in the right direction. So I thank the gentleman for being here this evening.

One thing that the gentleman from Oregon said that really struck home—and helps me to introduce a very good friend of mine from El Paso, Claudia Yoli—were his comments about family and the importance of family and how fundamental family is to our success.

So I ask those in the Chamber this evening to think about Claudia Yoli, who is pictured here, to my right, in front of the White House, perhaps in 2013 when she served as an intern in my congressional office here. She came to this country for the first time at the age of 8, from Venezuela, and has been nothing but exceptional to the community that she lives in, to the country that is now her home, and to those that she has worked with, including me and my office, and our State Senator Jose Rodriguez, for whom she works today. She showed courage in coming to our townhall on Monday evening, where she told us about all of this and then shared something that was so personally painful and tragic that it could only help me to understand truly what is at stake here.

In 2010, Claudia's mother traveled back to Venezuela. Because of Claudia's status, because she was a DREAMer and because of provisions within the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, she was not able to go back to Venezuela with her mother.

Unfortunately, last year, Claudia's mother passed away in Venezuela, and Claudia could not be there to comfort her mother in her dying days, nor could she be there for the funeral, nor could she be there with those family members who came together to grieve her mother's passing. Our inaction causes tremendous pain and suffering for those whom we have the power to help right now.

I yield at this point to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. FOSTER), another colleague with whom I was elected in 2012.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I am Congressman BILL FOSTER, and I am proud to represent the 11th District of Illinois.

In our district, we have vibrant immigrant communities from all over the world. I have met many DREAMers, both at home in Illinois and right here in the Halls of Congress. For many of them, the United States is the only country that they have ever called home.

Our district includes the diverse cities of Aurora, Bolingbrook, Joliet, and others. In Aurora, the East Aurora High School District 131 has one of the largest Naval Junior ROTCs in the world. Many of these young ROTC students come from immigrant families, and they dream one day of serving our country in the Armed Forces. You can see it in their faces during flag ceremonies, parades, and you can see the admiration of the younger children looking up to these ROTC DREAMers. Many of them are here because their parents dreamed of a better life for their children.

The DACA program has been incredibly successful. Over half a million young people are currently enrolled in it. They are living examples of the American Dream, the idea that anyone could come here and have a fulfilling and prosperous life regardless of where you come from and where you live.

Instead of creating new opportunities for these great young people, Republicans in Congress have repeatedly voted to end the DACA program. We need to reform our outdated immigration laws and not double down on a broken system. As their Representatives, we should honor their patriotism and dedication to our country with support, not fear and degradation. It is a pretty simple proposition.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. FOSTER) for being here this evening, for standing up for some who, especially right now, feel that perhaps their government is not with them and perhaps these commitments that were made to them that engendered their trust, their willingness to come forward to share their personal information, their addresses, their identities, perhaps have been abandoned. Your presence here tonight, your words, I think, do much to show them that that is not the case and that there is still a chance in this country that we will do the right thing.

I appreciate the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. FOSTER) for being here tonight.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me say that, whether it is these 750,000-plus DREAMers, these young Americans who, at a very tender age, were brought to this country by their parents or relatives and in every single way, except for citizenship, are no different than my three children or anyone else that I represent in the great City of El Paso, Texas—these DREAMers are going to high school, are serving in our Armed Forces, are attending our universities, are, in many respects, the future of our communities, of our country, who have so much to gain personally and so much to give back to this country. These DREAMers must be spared from any decisions that would break the trust that was created with them, that would force them back to their countries of origin, which they no longer know as home, whose language they no longer speak, where they no longer have family with whom they can reside.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is also important, on the larger subject of how we talk about those who are in our country from another country, that we remember a few facts. For example, the border that connects us with our country and neighbor to the south, Mexico, is as safe today as it has ever been. The community that I have the honor to represent and to serve, El Paso, Texas, which is conjoined with Ciudad Juarez to form the largest binational community anywhere in the world, is the safest city in the United States. It is safe not in spite of, but precisely because of, our connection to Mexico, the Mexican immigrants, the Mexican Americans, and those who are in our community, documented or otherwise, that make El Paso such a tremendously safe, wonderful, thriving community.

We know that U.S. cities on the border with Mexico and U.S. cities with large immigrant populations are, in fact, far safer than the average U.S. city in the interior, be that in Kentucky, be that in Iowa. That is what we have to be proud of. That is what we need to share with the American public.

We also need them to know that immigrants, documented or otherwise—and including, especially, those who are undocumented—commit crimes, including violent crimes, at a far lower rate than do native-born U.S. citizens.

We need to remember that we have so much to be proud of, so much to be grateful for, so much to celebrate in the immigrants' story, especially these DREAMers who, right now, live in a period of uncertainty, fear, and anxiety. It is incumbent upon us in this Chamber to do what we must to change our laws to reflect our values and the reality in our communities and in our country. Mr. Speaker, I stand ready to work with any Member on either side of the aisle to do just that.

I want to thank my colleagues who joined me tonight to help drive home the very important point that everyone who is in our country that has registered with the government, that has come forward, that has applied successfully under the DACA program deserves to stay here and deserves our help to ensure our laws allow them to do that going forward.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, thank you to my colleague Mr. O'ROURKE for his work to highlight such an important issue.

Since November 9th, many of the immigrants in my district of Dallas-Fort Worth have been rightfully nervous about their future in the United States.

It is no secret where the President-Elect stands on immigration.

He has vowed to repeal the highly successful Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, commonly known as DACA.

This move is wrong for America and for the immigrants whose lives have been forever changed by the program.

Since 2012, over 135,000 bright young Texans have successfully applied for the program.

It has been life changing for all those who qualified.

This has been especially true for one of my constituents, Erik.

Erik is a 27-year-old DACA recipient who immigrated to the United States from Mexico with his mother when he was just two years old.

Erik was unaware of his immigration status for the majority of his life until he reached a critical milestone at the age of 16.

When he asked his mother if he could apply for his driver's license, what normally would be an exciting event turned into a difficult conversation with his mother about his immigration status.

Erik was devastated because although he called the United States home, he would be unable to move forward with his life as he planned.

Once he graduated from high school, Erik knew that attending college would be a significant challenge—one he almost didn't take on.

He shared that he wasn't even sure college was the right decision because he was unsure that he could get a job after he graduated.

Yet, he persevered and graduated in 2011—but once again was confronted with the reality that his undocumented status created additional challenges.

Although he was college educated, Erik couldn't legally work in the United States.

But with the announcement of DACA in 2012, Erik had a ray of hope.

Finally, Erik could legally work and better participate in the country he's called home since the age of two.

Since successfully receiving DACA status, Erik has worked as a Store Systems Engineer at Rent-A-Car and has advocated for other undocumented immigrants.

Unfortunately, the newly found freedom Erik enjoyed under DACA is now in jeopardy.

Now, with just weeks away until the President-Elect is sworn into office, millions of DREAMers are frightened they will be forced to return to the shadows or be targeted for deportation.

These young aspiring immigrants are already part of our communities.

They attend our schools, work alongside us, and live in our neighborhoods.

For Erik and the thousands of other DREAMers across Texas, the revocation of DACA could mean returning to countries they haven't called home since they were children.

While we work to reform our broken immigration system, we must remember that the immigrants we speak of are just like us—they have hopes, dreams, and want to live a good life.

Like Erik, I believe that we need to move forward with immigration reform.

I believe we can do so in a way that keeps families together and benefits our country as a whole at the same time.

I stand here alongside my colleagues to remind our country's DREAMers that the fight isn't over.

Our fight here in Congress has just begun.

PROTESTS OF THE DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DONOVAN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) for 30 minutes.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to talk about the rule of law, the importance of enforcement of the rule of law, the importance of a government that stands for law and order.

I ask your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, as I begin my comments tonight by reading a resolution of support, a resolution that illustrates the position of a very important organization in my State of North Dakota, the North Dakota Veterans Coordinating Council.

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It reads like this:

Whereas: The protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline have been going on for over 100 days in North Dakota.

Whereas: The protests have been conducted on public and private land without proper permission.

Whereas: The protests have not remained peaceful. In fact, the protesters have caused millions of dollars in damage. They have destroyed public and privately owned property, vehicles, and equipment to include heavy equipment and trucks owned by private contractors, at least two government trucks, cut privately owned fences, and slaughtered farm animals owned by private farms. Protesters have assaulted and thrown Molotov cocktails and hard objects at North Dakota law enforcement officers and military personnel who are sworn to keep the peace and protect North Dakota's citizens.

Whereas: Protesters have desecrated North Dakota State and Federal property, to include the North Dakota State Capitol and, yes, the North Dakota pillar of the World War II Monument right here in Washington, D.C., located at The National Mall.

Whereas: The protesters of the Dakota Access Pipeline in and around Standing Rock have desecrated the American flag by flying it upside down, sewing emblems over the flag, and displaying emblems and non-U.S. flags in a dominant manner to the U.S. flag in violation of North Dakota Century Code.

Whereas: 95 percent of the protesters are not North Dakota citizens or Native Americans. Many are professional paid protesters