

Growing up, I constantly had all my teachers say to me: Do good in school, try your best at anything you do, stay out of trouble, and you are guaranteed to go far in life.

Let me step out of her comments for a second. Boy, if that is not an encapsulation of the American dream—“do good in school, try your best at anything you do, stay out of trouble, and you are guaranteed to go far in life”—I don’t think I could find a better way to encapsulate what we hope is the story for every single child in this country.

Vania said:

So that is exactly what I did. Most other DACA recipients did the exact same, but it currently doesn’t seem enough for this government. There is no longer a fight for a work permit but rather a fight for my human rights. I am just as worthy to live here and carry out my goals as any other natural born citizenship. I have done my best, consistently contributed to society in a positive way. This is my home. I deserve to feel safe here, and I will continue to fight for that until I do.

Mirka is from Wallingford, CT, and she is a Southern Connecticut State University student. She said:

I came here from Mexico sixteen years ago. I am currently a senior at Southern Connecticut State University, studying bilingual education.

We need more good people in bilingual education.

I just started student teaching last week, but all that is in danger. Besides being able to get a license and work permit, DACA has allowed me to follow through on my passion of becoming a teacher. It has given me hope that I have a future career in education and that I can live my life without fear of deportation.

An in-need profession—bilingual educators. Somebody willing to devote their life to our kids needs our help.

Faye in Norwalk says:

I am one of the more than 800,000 DACA recipients in the United States. I am from Trinidad and Tobago and have been in the United States almost 19 years. I live in Norwalk, CT, and I have lived there for about 16 years. It is home to me.

You hear that over and over again: It is home to me.

I am currently a Lead Radiology Scheduler, and I have a second job working at Ulta, both of which I enjoy. My goal in working both jobs is to purchase my first home.

That is another very critical component of the American dream—home ownership.

Growing up, I wanted to be a homeowner. I wanted a place that I could call mine, and with DACA I saw that as a possibility. Now I’m not sure when or if that would come through, but I still will continue to work hard because in my heart I know God is bigger than even this moment, and I know that we will be victorious. Even in a land that would not allow me to claim it as my home, I want to buy a house of my own to call my home. One day I will be called American not just among my undocumented community but by a Nation.

I mean, listen, we have some very articulate people in this body, Republicans and Democrats. I am not sure that any of us could write something that poignant, that beautiful, and that

compelling: I am not sure if any of that will come through, but I am going to continue to work hard because in my heart I know that God is bigger than even this moment, and I know that we will be victorious. Even in a land that would not allow me to claim it as my home, I want to buy a house to call it my home. One day I will be called an American not just among my community but by my Nation.

There are 4,900 DACA recipients in just my State alone. I have met a lot of them. Frankly, maybe not everyone is as beautifully articulate as Faye, but, boy, they have done some very impressive things with their lives, maybe in part because they always knew that their status here was in jeopardy and they had to make the most of their time in the United States, not knowing when it would end, knowing that they had opportunities here in the United States that they simply would not and could not have if they ever went home, especially those kids who came here when they were 3 years old, going back home to a place where they might not even speak the language—they certainly know no one—a place where opportunity is farther off even for those who were born there. They worked hard, and they hustled a little bit more, knowing that they might be at risk of some day being pushed out of this country.

They are Americans. Every single one of these students, these Dreamers, use the phrase “This is home.” And they want our help.

I think this is a moral issue, first and foremost. It is how we treat each other. These people are our neighbors. They are our coworkers.

Eight hundred business leaders—CEOs from companies such as Walmart, Target, Facebook, Pepsi, Kaiser—want them to stay here because they are their employees. They know how much they add to the economic bounty of this country. They wrote to us and asked for us to provide permanent protection for these kids.

Seventy-five national colleges and universities, including all the ones in my State—Yale, Trinity, Connecticut College, the State universities—said the same thing. They want to educate these kids. They see them. They see what stellar students they are, and they just can’t imagine the United States deciding to send 800,000 of these incredibly capable kids away.

One hundred eighty-six civil and human rights groups running the gamut say: This is a moral and civil rights issue. Let these kids stay.

Because of President Trump’s decision to telegraph the end of the temporary protection for these students, the burden is now on us, Republicans and Democrats, to do something and do something soon. It is hard to describe the psychological toll on these kids right now. I mean, it was bad enough when they were pushed into the shadows. It got a little bit better when they got temporary protection. But now

that we have put a clock on, now that they have revealed themselves to the world and put themselves on a list that can allow them to be targeted, there is a little bit of their soul that atrophies every day as they wonder whether we are going to come together and do the right thing. Part of the reason part of them is crumbling inside is because they see themselves as being made political pawns in a bigger game here.

It would be so easy for us to decide to protect these kids. Just do it now. Don’t wait until the end of the year. Don’t wait until this issue is mixed together with all sorts of other must-pass legislation. Just come together right now and step up and give these kids some degree of confidence that they can be here.

I have heard so many of my Republican colleagues say they want to do that. Why wait? Why push this up until the last minute? Do it right now. It is the right thing to do.

In the end, whoever is up there does not look at borders. He looks at us. He looks into our soul. He thinks about how we treat those who need our help and our protection. And no one needs our help and protection more than these kids right now—5,000 of them in my State and 800,000 of them across the country.

So my plea is simple, Mr. President: Let’s do this and do this now. Let’s give permanent protection, citizenship, pathways to citizenship, to these beautiful boys and girls, men and women. Don’t make this issue about politics. Don’t make it about parties. Don’t make these kids a bargaining chip in a bigger game. Just do the right thing. I promise you, if you do, you won’t regret it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

CLIMATE DISRUPTION

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, climate disruption is the seminal challenge of our generation. We have seen the impacts occurring all around the world. We see it in the disappearing Arctic ice. We see it in the melting permafrost. We see it in the change of carbon dioxide and methane being emitted from peat bogs, disappearing glaciers, dying coral reefs, and certainly more powerful storms and raging fires.

It is the responsibility of those of us in this generation, in this time, to take action. Indeed, communities across the globe are taking action. They are increasing the energy efficiency of buildings, vehicles, and appliances, and they are replacing carbon-polluting fossil fuel energy with renewable energy. This is such an important issue.

How much do you know about the changes underway? Well, let’s find out. Welcome to episode 7 of the Senate Climate Disruption Quiz.

Our first question is, Since the year 2000, the rate of global carbon dioxide pollution has decreased dramatically, decreased slightly, stayed the same, or increased substantially? Lock in your answers.

The answer is D, increased substantially. Many folks think that because of the actions being taken at the local level and by the community of nations and the Paris Agreement, that, in fact, global CO₂ pollution has decreased dramatically, but it has not. The rate at which the pollution is occurring is increasing. So it isn't just the total level. For example, in 1990, we had 354 parts per million; 10 years later, in 2000, we were up to 369.64 parts per million; and in 2017, we were up to 408.8 parts per million. The levels are climbing, but the speed is increasing as well. In that period around 1990, we were increasing about 1½ parts per million per year; by 2000, it was about 2 parts per million per year; and now we are at 2½ parts per million per year. So this increase is substantial.

As a community of nations, we have to not only proceed to decrease total carbon pollution, but first we have to get the rate of increase under control.

This brings us to the second question: In September of this year, how many miles did a Proterra bus drive on a single charge? Did this bus set a record by going 270 miles, the distance between L.A. and Las Vegas, or did it set a record by going 600 miles, equivalent from New York City to Columbia, SC? Did it travel over 1,100 miles, the equivalent distance from Arizona to Arkansas? Did it manage to go 2,092 miles, the shortest distance from the east coast to the west coast in America? Lock in your answers.

The correct answer is C. It went 1,100 miles. The electric bus traveled 1,100 miles. This bus was a new version of the Catalyst E2. It is called the Catalyst E2 Max. It is produced by Proterra. It has a battery that is 50 percent larger than the previous version that is being sold commercially—that is the Catalyst E2. That Proterra that is currently being sold has a functional range for the transit agencies that are buying it of over 350 miles, about 350 miles. That is pretty impressive. But by having a battery that is 50 percent lighter and moving quite slowly, driving it slowly, they managed to go 1,100 miles. It is really an indication of the rapid transformation of this particular type of electric vehicle.

Question No. 3: Warmer weather is contributing to what problem in major American cities? Is the problem caused by warmer weather transit delays? Is it exploding rat populations? Is warmer weather contributing to larger potholes or to longer tourist seasons?

Well, the dramatic answer here is that the warmer weather is contributing to exploding rat populations. Rat breeding usually slows in winter, but if you have a mild winter, that doesn't happen.

Since 2013, the pest control company Orkin has reported significant growth in its services—61 percent growth in Chicago, 67 percent in Boston, 174 percent in San Francisco, 129 percent in New York City, and 57 percent in Wash-

ington, DC, right here where the Capitol is located. This is a major economic and health problem. Rats caused \$19 billion in economic damage in 2000 from, among other things, eating away at buildings and infrastructure, and, of course, they are carriers of rodent-borne diseases like E. coli and salmonella. Plus, we just simply don't like having them in our cities.

Let's turn to the next question, question No. 4. As of today, how many nations in the world are rejecting the Paris Agreement that addresses climate disruption? Is the answer 25 out of the roughly 200 nations in the world or 12 or 3 nations or 1 nation? Lock in your answers.

The answer is not 25 nor 12, and it is not 3. It is now just one nation that is rejecting the Paris Agreement. Now, until recently there were three nations. You had two nations that had not signed up and one nation that had said it was going to withdraw. The two that had not signed up were Nicaragua and Syria, and the one that said it was going to withdraw was the United States of America. President Trump made that announcement. But a short time ago, Nicaragua announced it was going to ratify the treaty, and today Syria announced it was going to ratify the treaty. That leaves the United States standing alone as the only Nation that is saying it is going to reject the Paris Agreement.

Of course, this has a big impact on American leadership in the world, since we worked very hard to bring nations together to craft this agreement. The nations were so impressed that all of them in the world are now participating except us—except the United States.

Let's go to question No. 5. Better management of our lands and forests could help reach what percent of the goals laid out in the Paris Agreement? Could better management of lands and forests contribute to reaching 5 percent, or one-twentieth of the goal; or 12 percent, roughly one-eighth; or 25 percent, roughly one-quarter of the goal; or 37 percent, more than one-third of the goal laid out in Paris? Lock in your answers.

The correct answer to this is D, 37 percent, or more than one-third, a surprisingly high number. An international study released last month said the natural climate solutions in guarding the management of our lands and our forests could help us reach more than a third of the goals laid out in the Paris Agreement. The paper looked at 20 conservation and improved land management actions that help increase carbon storage or avoid greenhouse gas emissions in a cost-effective manner. The single most important factor among them is reforestation.

Years ago I heard an individual say: Wouldn't it be great if we could just invent something that could pull carbon dioxide out of the air. Well, we actually have that already. It is called a tree. Growing trees is a very effective strategy in addressing carbon pollution.

Of course, there are issues related to how we manage our forests and making them more resilient to forest fires, where they are less likely to burn and emit carbon. Certainly, there is how we farm and how we take care of other types of lands, including peat restoration and coastal restoration.

Those are our five questions for this edition, episode 7, of the Senate Climate Disruption Quiz. These questions were ripped from the headlines in regard to the biggest test facing human kind on this planet. It is up to us in this generation to act.

We are the first generation to experience this enormous range of impacts from carbon pollution and a warming planet, and we are the only generation that is able to head off disaster ahead by acting quickly now. We are racing the clock. There is no time to spare. So stay engaged and do all you can to help take this on.

Meanwhile, as we learn more about technology and about the planet, all in the near future, I will bring you Climate Disruption Quiz Episode 8.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The Senator from Connecticut.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, we are here in the wake of yet another senseless mass shooting. Again, we continue to watch in horror a community torn apart and families seeking solace and comfort, loved ones deprived of people close to them forever. We know about that feeling in Connecticut because we had been through it in Sandy Hook just 5 years ago, almost to the month. Next month will be the fifth anniversary.

Every day in America in communities across this great country, there are senseless similar acts of violence one by one, person by person. Every day there is a mass instance of people dying of gun violence. The danger is that this kind of incident will become a normal way of life in America. We cannot allow ourselves to become desensitized. We cannot lose hope that action is possible. We cannot allow ourselves to succumb to this supposed normal. We cannot surrender to fear or complacency or hopelessness.

Our hearts and prayers are with the brave souls who are enduring this unspeakable grief and pain. Again, we know about it in Connecticut because I remember well that afternoon at Sandy Hook and the days that followed when families hoped for numbness. They hoped that the rawness and unimaginable pain of that loss would leave. For some, it has lessened, but it will never go away for them or for the families in Texas or Orlando or San Bernardino or Virginia Tech. The list is a long one, and it should include those families in Hartford, New Haven, Stamford, Bridgeport and in other communities—not necessarily urban, but suburban and rural—around Connecticut and around the country that have endured this same grief.