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PROTECTING DREAMERS

PROPOSAL BY


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WHO ARE DREAMERS?



DREAMers are young undocumented immigrants who came to this country as children at no fault of their own. DREAMers have grown up in the United States for most of their lives and many do not even remember their country of birth. DREAMers have been fighting for over a decade for a pathway to legal status or citizenship, something a supermajority of Americans of both major political parties support.

WHAT IS DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA)?

DACA is an executive order put in place since 2012 by then-President Obama that allows young undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children to apply for temporary protection from deportation and a two-year renewable work permit after passing a rigorous background check. Nearly, 800,000 young people are currently enrolled in this program. In September 2017, the current administration announced they were ending the DACA program. This caused a whirlwind of legal challenges, and as a result, the U.S. Supreme Court will be ruling on the fate of the DACA program no later than June of this year. This means there is the possibility of the DACA program officially ending, putting almost 800,000 young people at risk of unemployment and deportation. Below are actions created to better prepare for undocumented students who were unable to receive DACA, as well as to prepare for the upcoming Supreme Court decision on DACA, which will affect the lives of all undocumented students on our campus.






EDUCATE THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY ON THE CHALLENGES OF UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

Training is a vital first step in shaping the campus climate to respect the experiences of immigrant students. Ask SGA to use their power and access to hold Undocumented Student Training with issue experts such as multicultural centers, and external organizations. This training, which will occur before next school year will be accessible to staff, faculty, and students to learn about the issues that undocumented students face while also ensuring that members of the campus community are trained to not expose the status of undocumented students due to a lack of knowledge. This training will also ensure that professors and other faculty members are a resource to undocumented students and not a threat.

CREATE A SCHOLARSHIP FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS



Currently, our campus' institutional merit scholarships are only open to U.S. Citizens and Legal Residents, but we should open these scholarships up to all students, regardless of citizenship. Right now, our campus only has the Terp Dream Fund, but we want to work to expand the amount the award gives, so more students can benefit and lessen their financial burden, as well to have a better application process to the scholarship. Alternatively, other institutions have created fundraising events on campus, that go to funding scholarships for undocumented students. We propose partnering with student organizations to create an event on our campus for this type of fundraising since the student government usually has a wider audience than student organizations.





CONNECT UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS WITH CAMPUS MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES


Providing a support system that allows confidential space for undocumented students to be seen by a licensed therapist can lift a major weight for these students, even in just one meeting. Since there are many undocumented students on our campus, other colleges have found success in group therapy, which can be instrumental in bettering their mental health. It shows that they are not alone, and can share common struggles they face with their peers.



PREPARE LOCAL POLICE AND ADMINISTRATION




We will build relationships with our local and campus police departments and stay updated on how the City of College Park plans to respond to the upcoming changes in immigration policies regarding undocumented and DREAMer immigrants. We will also educate our administration and campus police about the struggles of undocumented students as well as the threats they may face if DACA were to end. We will continue to prepare administration and campus police by prepping for the possibility of ICE agents entering campus without a warrant. Having comprehensive plans now for these situations can avoid tragic situations in the future.





TRACK LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL POLICY CHANGES

We would use our platforms as student leaders to track and monitor policy changes within the City of College Park, Prince George's County, the State of Maryland, and the United States as a whole that relates to any form of immigration issues. Being up to date on current policy is important in both protecting undocumented students, making sure our school knows when their students are threatened, and knowing when to reach out to our elected officials to lobby in support or against any policy that is introduced. By this, we will create a plan for disseminating the information to students in cooperation with university administration.



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SGA Elections April 22-24