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Supporting U.S. in federal court, USC-UCLA report underscores urgent, negative effects on American children of undocumented immigrant parents.

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A joint report from the University of Southern California and UCLA, documenting the damage done to American children who live in the shadow of a parent's unauthorized immigration status, provides systematic evidence for a new effort to turn back court challenges to President Obama's executive action on immigration.

The report, "Removing Insecurity: How American Children Will Benefit From President Obama's Executive Action on Immigration," is being released today in conjunction with the filing of an amicus brief by educational organizations and children's rights advocates that support the administration's position in litigation over the President's plans to shield millions of unauthorized immigrants from deportation. Citing the report as evidence, the brief filed today with the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit argues for immediate implementation of the President's programs in order to alleviate ongoing and serious harm to more than five million American children, most of them native-born U.S. citizens.

"This research shows how children pay the price for our broken immigration system," said Wendy Cervantes, vice president of immigration and child rights policy at First Focus, a bipartisan advocacy organization dedicated to making children and families the priority in federal policy. First Focus and the American Federation of Teachers were the lead signatories of the amicus brief.

At stake in the case is the Deferred Action to Parents of American Citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents program (DAPA) that would grant permission to parents to remain in the U.S. for three years and to work legally as long as they meet a number of conditions, including residing in the U.S. continuously since 2010 and passing a criminal background check.

Assessing peer –reviewed research by leading developmental psychologists, sociologists, demographers, and scholars in other fields, the USC-UCLA report constructs a broad scientific case demonstrating the life-altering benefits the American children of unauthorized immigrants would receive from the proposed administrative relief. According to the report, studies utilizing

multiple methodologies and varied data-sets have concluded not only that children are paying a substantial cost for a parent's unauthorized status but also that removing the fear of deportation and allowing parents to work legally can alleviate those costs.

The amicus brief was filed today in *Texas, et al., v. United States et al*., which originated in a lawsuit that seeks to reverse the executive orders on immigration issued by the President last November that included creation of DAPA. A federal judge blocked implementation just before the initiative was to go into effect in February and now that ruling is under appeal in the fifth circuit, which sits in New Orleans.

"The USC-UCLA report provided extensive scientific evidence to support the argument that the U.S.-citizen children of unauthorized immigrants are suffering immediate and acute harm from the injunction blocking implementation of the DAPA initiative," said Marielena Hincapié, executive director of the National Immigration Law Center, which is coordinating legal strategy among the administration's allies in the case. "This evidence will provide a powerful and compelling argument before the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals as it considers whether to allow the president's immigration initiatives to take effect."

An estimated 4.5 million American-born children, who are guaranteed legal citizen status by the U.S. constitution, have one or both parents who are unauthorized migrants. Another three-quarters of a million children would benefit from DAPA because they are eligible to become citizens. The report and the amicus brief argue that the public interest is served by allowing these children to grow up without the specter of either a family broken by the deportation of a parent or being obliged to leave their homeland.

"The data are in and they speak loud and clear: the relief proposed by the president will bring very real and immediate benefits to these American children and their immigrant parents," offered Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco, Wasserman dean of the Graduate School of Education & Information Studies at UCLA and one of the report's authors. "Protecting a parent from deportation is the right thing to do. It immediately and significantly improves these children's lives now and moving forward, enabling them to contribute productively for decades to come."

Roberto Suro, a professor at the Sol Price School of Public Policy at the University of Southern California and lead author of the report said, "By focusing on what is at stake for millions of American children, this report and the amicus brief attempt to reframe the immigration policy debate. Reasonable minds can differ on whether there is blame to attach to the parents. There is no reasonable case to be made for punishing their children. Yet, every day they are being punished."

Cervantes of First Focus added, "Professor Suro and his colleagues have shined a spotlight on the district court's failings, but also on Congress' failure to deliver immigration reform that works for children."

The report is a joint effort by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute at USC headed by Suro and the Institute for Immigration, Globalization & Education at UCLA headed by Suárez-Orozco. To better understand DAPA's potential impact, the report's authors spent several months examining more that 50 recent studies on the children of unauthorized immigrants, including numerous highly-cited scientific works published in some of the most respected academic journals in the world. The result is a broad ranging synthesis of the state of knowledge that was made available to the legal team drafting the amicus brief filed today. In summary the report concludes:

> A substantial and growing body of research documents the damage done by living in the shadows of a parent's unauthorized immigration status. Common sense suggests that the children of such parents will pay a price. What the research shows is the magnitude of that price. Fear and uncertainty breed difficulties evident from early childhood through adolescence and emerging adulthood. The negative effects have been measured in educational achievement, cognitive development and emotional stability. But the research also shows that these negative effects can be reversed and that a parent's legalization can place these young people on a life trajectory equal to their peers.

"By amassing research from many scholars in many fields, this report makes it clear that what is at stake in Texas, et al., v. United States et al. goes beyond the legal issues at hand: An adverse ruling could hurt the lives of millions of American children who would otherwise be the greatest beneficiaries of this policy," said Hincapié of the National Immigration Law Center.

"Removing Insecurity: How American Children Will Benefit From President Obama's Executive Action on Immigration," by Roberto Suro, Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco, and Stephanie L. Canizales, is available here for downloading.

# # #

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REMOVING INSECURITY

How American Children Will Benefit From President Obama's Executive Action on Immigration

A Report by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute at USC and the Institute for Immigration, Globalization, and Education at UCLA

By Roberto Suro, Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco and Stephanie L. Canizales

Tomas Rivera Policy Institute
Sol Price School of Public Policy
University of Southern California
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The Tomas Rivera Policy Institute address the challenges and opportunities of demographic diversity in the 21st century global city through original research, digital publications and student activities.

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The Institute for Immigration, Globalization, & Education conducts multidisciplinary research engaging policymakers, practitioners, and institutional leaders to expand opportunities for diverse, vulnerable, and marginalized students.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

More than five million American children—U.S. citizens or legal immigrants eligible for citizenship—will be the most important beneficiaries of the executive action on immigration issued by President Obama in November.

The great majority, nearly 4.5 million, are native-born Americans; one or both of their parents are unauthorized migrants. The Constitution guarantees them all the rights of any other U.S. citizen except for one: They do not have the right to grow up with their parents in their own country. Inflexible enforcement of immigration laws could mean a parent's deportation. Then the outcome is either a broken family or an American child forced to grow up in an alien land. Records from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement show that more than seventy thousand adults with one or more U.S.-born children were deported in 2013 alone, but no records are kept of the children's fate.[1] The president's administrative relief program would shield these parents from deportation at least temporarily. This report catalogues the life-altering benefits that would accrue to the children.

A substantial and growing body of research documents the damage done by living in the shadows of a parent's unauthorized immigration status. Common sense suggests that the children of such parents will pay a price. What the research shows is the magnitude of

that price. Fear and uncertainty breed difficulties evident from early childhood through adolescence and emerging adulthood. The negative effects have been measured in educational achievement, cognitive development and emotional stability. But the research also shows that these negative effects can be reversed and that a parent's legalization can place these young people on a life trajectory equal to their peers.

On November 20, 2014, President Barack Obama announced a program that squarely aims at remedying the condition of these American children. The Deferred Action to Parents of American Citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents program (DAPA) would grant permission to remain in the United States for three years and to work legally as long as the parents met a number of conditions, including being in the country continuously since 2010 and passing a criminal background check. The DAPA program has yet to be implemented and faces challenges both in Congress and the courts.

The negative effects have been measured in educational achievement, cognitive development and emotional stability. But the research also shows that these negative effects can be reversed.

Administrative relief of the kind proposed by the president will bring immediate benefits to the eligible immigrants, their families, communities and employers. The long-term benefits will become most evident in the lives of their children. Protecting a parent from deportation improves a child's prospects for a lifetime. These American children will make greater contributions to the nation for many decades to come as a result of these executive actions, and the effects would be larger and longer lasting if Congress enacted a permanent legalization program.

In order to understand the potential impact of the president's administrative relief program, this report reviews recent research on the children of unauthorized immigrants that was conducted by multiple scholars working independently in several different fields, using a variety of data sources and methodologies. The major findings are highly consistent and include the following:

- As early as ages two and three, children of undocumented parents had lower cognitive skills as measured by standardized tests than comparable children in households where immigration status is not an issue.
- Being the child of an undocumented parent is associated with heightened symptoms of anxiety and depression that are particularly evident in adolescence as teens grapple with uncertainty over their place in the world. The effects persist

even among young adults who have made it to college; their levels of anxiety are greater than among peers with no family immigration issues.

- Growing up as the child of an unauthorized migrant is associated with reduced access to health care and greater levels of food insecurity—even when a U.S. citizen child is eligible for benefits.
- These negative effects can be reversed if the parents are legalized, particularly if the legalization takes place when the child is still young. Studies of young adults whose parents were legalized through amnesties enacted in 1986 show strong educational accomplishment and upward mobility.

The Pew Research Center estimates that some 4.5 million U.S.-born children younger than eighteen were living in the United States with at least one parent who was an unauthorized migrant as of 2012, the most recent year for which estimates have been published. That figure has been growing fast, more than doubling since 2000 when Pew calculates there were fewer than 2.2 million children living under those circumstances. To put that statistic in perspective, consider that those 4.5 million children are equivalent in number to the entire population of Louisiana.

Studies of young adults whose parents were legalized through amnesties enacted in 1986 show strong educational accomplishment and upward mobility.

The size and growth of this subpopulation of Americans is an indicator of how policy challenges are evolving as the current era of migration matures. After five decades of sizable migration, the foreign-born population includes millions of individuals who have been living in the United States for a long time and have well-settled households, steady employment and deep community ties. As such, policy issues related to the children of immigrants have gained prominence alongside those related to immigrants themselves. This certainly applies to the unauthorized migrant population, which also has gradually become more permanent and more settled. Never more than a third of the total foreign born and now close to a quarter, the unauthorized are workers in our midst, worshipers in our churches, and also parents of American children. In a population of 11.2 million unauthorized migrants, more than four million are adults with U.S. citizen children and as of 2012 those parents have been living in the United States for fifteen years as a median, according to the Pew estimates.[2]

Regardless of how one explains the circumstances that produced the unauthorized population, the unavoidable fact is that they are here, most have been here for a long

time, many have made durable households and careers, and millions of U.S. citizens look to them as parents. That perspective, viewing them as parents, workers, and long-term contributors to American communities, impels different policy responses than if they are viewed as merely newcomers easily removed because they have no roots here. Seeing them as parents, whose well-being is inextricably linked with that of their children, requires confronting a stark choice.

One choice is to put aside other priorities and target law enforcement resources to the apprehension, detention and removal of people who have committed the civil offense of living here out of status and accepting the fact that native-born children and citizenship-eligible children will be denied the right to live with their parents in their own country. The other choice, as embodied in President Obama's executive action, is to decide that limited enforcement resources should be focused on deporting felons and other high-priority targets and that the parents of American children should be able to raise their families here without living in constant fear of deportation.

The research summarized in this report provides abundant evidence that DAPA would bestow potentially life-altering benefits on millions of American children. Even though it is only a temporary reprieve, it lifts the shadow of insecurity off their families by deferring the possibility of deportation for three years. To ensure that the five million children living with parents eligible for executive action secure the full benefits, Congress will need to enact a permanent legalization that removes the shadow altogether.

INTRODUCTION

The rise of mixed-status households and the threat of deportation

During the last decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, the unauthorized immigrant population grew substantially from 3.5 million in 1990 to a peak of 12.2 million in 2007 as the Great Recession began. It has been stable now for several years at about 11.2 million, according to estimates by the Pew Research Center.[3]

One inevitable result of having a large unauthorized population over a long period of time is a growing number of mixed-status families. The mechanism is simple: under the Fourteenth Amendment a child born in the United States is automatically a U.S. citizen regardless of other circumstances including parents' immigration status. (The children of diplomats are the sole prominent exception.) Mixed-status families come in a lot of permutations. An unauthorized migrant marries a legal immigrant or a U.S. citizen and they have children here who are U.S. citizens by birth. Or perhaps one or both parents in a family have children they brought here from their country of origin without authorization,

plus children born here. Or perhaps one or more members of the family has been able to gain legal status, either permanently or temporarily, while others have not. The possible combinations are as complicated as the entanglements of human lives can make them.

While a broken immigration system has permitted—some would say encouraged—a large population of unauthorized immigrants, life has gone on for those people. And, it has gone on for a long time now—62 percent of the unauthorized have lived in the United States for a decade or more, according to the Pew estimates, and a lot of families of different sorts have been made—38 percent of unauthorized adults, four million people, live with their U.S. citizen children. The number of U.S.-born children under eighteen living with at least one parent whose presence in the country is unauthorized more than doubled since 2000, when there were 2.2 million, to some 4.5 million in 2012, according to Pew estimates. Meanwhile, the number of children who are themselves unauthorized has declined from a peak of 1.6 million in 2005 to about 775,000 in 2012. Altogether about 7 percent of all school-aged children in the United States have at least one parent who is in the United States without authorization.[4] And, in considering how public policy addresses those children it is essential to consider that the great majority of them are native-born U.S. citizens. That is one of the most difficult legacies of a broken immigration system, a legacy that is addressed squarely by the president's executive action.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to know how many children have been directly affected by deportations because the federal government does not keep track of them.

While these mixed-status families have formed in neighborhoods across the country, the threat of deportation has lingered and, in recent years, intensified. If the fear of deportation is proportionate to the number of deportations, then the past seven years have been particularly fearful. A 2014 analysis of government records by the *New York Times* showed that the number of unauthorized immigrants deported for traffic offenses more than quadrupled during the first five years of the Obama administration compared with the last five years of the George W. Bush administration. The investigation concluded that two-thirds of the nearly two million people deported since Obama took office had committed minor infractions despite repeated claims by the administration to be prioritizing dangerous criminals.[5]

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to know how many children have been directly affected by deportations because the federal government does not keep track of them.

No documentation is available to enumerate how many children have been affected by recent deportations carried out by the Obama administration.[6] A 2009 report by the

Office of Inspector General at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) noted that there was no set protocol for consistently collecting data on whether individuals set for deportation had children, whether those children were U.S. citizens or if they were minors.[7]

The best available data appear to come from documents obtained from DHS through a Freedom of Information Act request by Colorlines, a nonprofit news organization that focuses on issues of racial justice. The DHS data that Colorlines shared online show that 204,810 individuals who reported they were parents of U.S.-born children were subject to removal during a little more than two years, from the fourth quarter of 2010 to the fourth quarter of 2012.[8] Still, we do not know how many children were affected by those actions. Nor do we know what has happened to them. There are no data on whether they are living here, in the country of their birth, how they have fared with the loss of one or both of their parents, or whether they have been obliged to leave the country. What is known is that every year several thousand, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of U.S. citizen children suffer this most grievous penalty at the hands of their own government.

Beyond those who are directly affected is a much larger population of families with unauthorized immigrant parents who live in fear of deportation. And it is that population, and particularly the more than five million American children—citizens by birth or eligible for citizenship—who are the subject of this report. As the research summarized below demonstrates, being the child of an unauthorized immigrant exacts a high price. By removing the threat of deportation, DAPA would measurably improve those children's lives.

THE CHILDREN OF UNAUTHORIZED MIGRANTS:

THE PRICE OF INSECURITY

A) Overview of the research: Multiple studies, multiple methods, all pointing to similar conclusions

A parent's immigration status can influence how a child grows up. That basic finding is grounded in the broad mainstream of current research on childhood development, which has concluded that parental factors can be powerful determinants of their offspring's well-being all the way into adulthood. A parent's immigration status not only matters. As this report will show, it matters a lot.

It might seem like a simple proposition: parents' well-being exercises an influence over their children. Nonetheless, a large body of scholarly research has been devoted to understanding how that influence works, its importance compared with other factors, and the long-term impacts on a child's development. Abundant data from fields as diverse as demography and neuroscience demonstrate powerful links between parental well-being and children's long-term outcomes. That well-being can be measured in many ways, including parental income, family structure, family size, mother's education and father's participation in the labor market. All have been shown to affect a child's development.[9] The impact has been found in children's literacy, completed years of schooling, socioeconomic mobility, physical and psychological health, as well as brain development. Indeed, the preponderance of evidence, for some time now, reveals that parental influences are often more important in shaping a child's life than institutional mechanisms such as schools.[10]

Different researchers from different scholarly fields using different data and methodologies have concluded time and again that a parent's unauthorized status imposes a severe penalty on their children.

In recent years a great deal of research has examined the ways that having a parent who is an unauthorized migrant influences a child's life. As reviewed below, different researchers from different scholarly fields using different data and methodologies have

concluded time and again that a parent's unauthorized status imposes a severe penalty on their children. Three interrelated findings are most important in weighing the importance of this research to the current policy debate: The negative consequences are multiple and severe. Fear of deportation is an important mechanism for inflicting those penalties. And the harm to children can be reversed when the fear of deportation is lifted.

An overview of the key research published in the *Harvard Education Review* in 2011 concluded: "The evidence reveals a consistent pattern: the effects of unauthorized status on development across the lifespan are uniformly negative, with millions of U.S. children and youth at risk of lower educational performance, economic stagnation, blocked mobility and ambiguous belonging. In all, the data suggest an alarming psychological formation."[11]

A parent's unauthorized status traps a child in a shadowed labyrinth of insecurity and confusion that proceeds from being born and raised American and yet harboring a sense of not belonging. The effects are tangible and devastating. What follows is a review of major findings from dozens of separate studies that have explored those effects in various dimensions of childhood.

B) Educational and developmental effects

Multiple studies have shown that citizen children of undocumented parents exhibit lower levels of cognitive development and emotional well-being throughout early childhood and adolescence than comparable children whose parents have no immigration issues. These ill effects result primarily from exposure to parents' psychological distress. The research that has produced this finding carefully isolated the impact of immigration status from other factors such as low incomes or low levels of education among the parents.[12] The president's executive action would eliminate the causes of the ill effects described below by lifting the threat of deportation, permitting parents to seek employment legally and to engage their communities openly.

Early childhood

As early as ages two and three, children of undocumented parents had lower cognitive skills as measured by standardized tests than comparable samples of children of parents who have no immigration issues. Research shows that "the lack of a pathway to citizenship for their parents is harmful to children's development—particularly their cognitive and language skills."[13]

"The lack of a pathway to citizenship for their parents is harmful to children's development—particularly their cognitive and language skills."

These findings are based on a study of 380 newborns recruited hours after birth in public hospitals in New York City and then followed for three years with assessments of the children and in-depth interviews with the parents. Conducted by Hirokazu Yoshikawa, a developmental psychologist formerly at Harvard and now a professor at New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, the research offers a detailed assessment of how the everyday experiences of undocumented parents differ from legal immigrants in ways that can affect their children's development.

Yoshikawa's 2011 book, Immigrants Raising Citizens, identifies three types of experiences that adversely affect U.S. citizen children:

- Parents are reluctant to interact with any government agencies to the point that children may not receive any resources for which they are eligible, and fear of interacting with the authorities could leave them vulnerable to criminal exploitation whether by smugglers, loan sharks or unscrupulous landlords.
- Undocumented immigrants tend to have more restricted social connections of the sort that can help child rearing as parents are cautious about interacting with neighbors, coworkers or even a playmate's parents out of fear their status will be discovered.
- The undocumented are more likely to experience exploitative work conditions, including unsafe workplaces, longer hours and lower pay.

The study found evidence of lower cognitive skills as early as twenty-four months and concluded that "parents' economic hardship and psychological distress—feelings of depression, anxiety, and worry—were responsible for this effect." At thirty-six months, additional effects on cognitive skills were associated with "the disastrous work conditions of the undocumented parents in the sample, combined with lower access to center-based child care."

A more generalized study based on a big data set similarly concluded that the children of the unauthorized are at greater risk of lower levels of development in the grade school years. That finding emerged from an analysis of data from the 2005 California Health Interview Survey, which has a sample of 43,020 households. The large sample enabled a team of researchers from the Institute for Social Science Research at the University of California Los Angeles to study developmental risks for children based on their parents' immigration status while controlling for other factors such as education, income and employment. Even comparing the children of legal Mexican immigrants with the children of unauthorized Mexican immigrants, the data showed that parental immigration status could be a negative factor.[14]

The effects on educational attainment are evident as early as kindergarten.[15] That finding comes from a study by Wen-Jui Han of New York University's Silver School of Social Work that used a large national dataset, the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study–Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K), to compare outcomes for the children of Mexican immigrants, who have high rates of unauthorized status, to outcomes for the children of Dominican immigrants who share many of the same socioeconomic characteristics but are much less likely to be unauthorized. After controlling a variety of other factors, the researchers found that children of Mexican migrants scored lower on standardized reading and math skills, a finding that supports other research on the consequences of unauthorized status.

Adolescence

During the usually turbulent years of adolescence, the children of parents who lack documentation pay an additional penalty in socio-emotional development. Stephanie Potochnick and Krista Perreira's study of depression and anxiety among Latino youth finds that "having an undocumented parent has been associated with higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms among youth."[16] Youth also exhibit behaviors of self-isolation or restricting social interactions for fear of exposing their family's immigration status.[17] A survey study of Latino immigrants' children over twelve years of age finds that parents' legal vulnerability and the impact of detention and/or deportation results in negative effects on children's emotional well-being and academic performance.[18]

"Having an undocumented parent has been associated with higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms among youth."

Children growing up with a mother who is an unauthorized migrant will end their education with up to 1.5 fewer years of schooling than children growing up under identical circumstances except for their mother's immigration status. That finding emerged from the Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) study, a major, multiyear, multi-method study of young adults with immigrant parents.19

Carola Suárez-Orozco, co-founder and co-director of the Harvard Immigration Projects and of Immigration studies at NYU and now a professor of human development and psychology at UCLA, found in a survey of 909 college students statistically higher levels of anxiety in students who are unauthorized immigrants compared to standard measures of their peers in the general population.[20]

In all, the negative consequences of parents' unauthorized status, including limited access to services and opportunities along with fear of deportation and family separation, have long-term and tangible developmental effects on the lives of their children, regardless of the children's citizenship status. Eliminating these negative consequences increases a child's cognitive development and well-being in childhood and adolescence.

C) Income

Of the 11.2 million undocumented immigrants in the United States today, eight million are employed.[21] Though their contributions to the workforce and U.S. economy are notable (in 2010 it was estimated that 38 percent of undocumented workers and their employers paid payroll taxes), their remuneration is limited. In 2006, the Russell Sage Foundation, an internationally recognized New York-based philanthropic think tank, released an edited volume entitled Making it Work: Low-wage Employment, Family Life, and Child Development, in which Harvard, UCLA and Soka University researchers brought together experts in low-wage work, family, support services and policy to assess the experiences of low-wage workers and their families. The study found that the undocumented have dramatically lower rates of wage growth.

With a work permit as provided for in the DAPA program, parents would have the opportunity to increase income, reduce poverty and thereby improve conditions for children.

Hirokazu Yoshikawa shows in *Immigrants Raising Citizens* that wage growth was near zero, even in the context of the booming economy of the mid-2000s, for undocumented parents in the landmark New York study.[22] His research further illustrates that lowered earnings of undocumented parents often push families into poverty that would not

otherwise be impoverished.

Poverty is associated with a variety of ill effects on children regardless of legal status.[23] Coupling poverty and undocumented status creates a sort of vicious cycle as poverty comes to exacerbate many problems associated with legal status of parents for U.S. children, and vice versa. For example, a study of Mexican and Dominican immigrant parents who were barred access to resources due to their lack of identification as U.S. residents found that families are more likely to experience psychological distress and further economic hardship.[24]

With a work permit as provided for in the DAPA program, parents would have the opportunity to increase income, reduce poverty and thereby improve conditions for children. Indeed, wage growth among low-wage working parents can benefit children's academic and behavioral development by increasing parents' expectations for their children's school success and achievement.25 Positive effects of legalization on family income are described in greater depth below.

D) Health and Nutrition

Although undocumented parents are not eligible for health programs and services, their U.S. citizen children are. Research suggests, however, that parents' undocumented status poses an obstacle to children's access to many of the means-tested benefits for which they are eligible such as the Children's Health Insurance Program or child-care subsidies. An in-depth study of three communities by Randolph Capps and colleagues at the Urban Institute revealed that families go to great lengths to avoid contact with social service providers despite their children's program or service eligibility for fear of being identified as undocumented and deported.[26]

Parents' undocumented status poses an obstacle to children's access to many of the means-tested benefits for which they are eligible.

Researchers from the Center for Family and Demographic Research analyzed data collected by the Survey of Program Dynamics and found that food insecurity among the children of non-citizens has been higher and more persistent since the passing of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, which made non-citizens ineligible for federally funded food assistance programs.[27]

Using national data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Kindergarten (ECLS-K) cohort, public policy researchers Ariel Kalil and Jen-Hao Chen found that children with immigrant mothers who are not U.S. citizens are more than twice as likely

to experience food insecurity than children of mothers with similar socioeconomic characteristics but who are native born.[28] Limited or uncertain access to nutrition can contribute to a range of developmental problems, from lower cognitive skills in early childhood and higher anxiety among adolescents.

All of these findings point to the same conclusion: children who are U.S. citizens by birth and who are thus eligible for the full range of public benefits designed to ensure their health care and nutrition often fail to take advantage of those benefits when parents fear any contact with public officials because of their immigration status. By eliminating the threat of deportation for these parents, DAPA would remove a barrier that prevents American children from receiving benefits that are their birthright.

E) Psychological effects

In a collaborative New York University and Harvard School of Education study, researchers developed a conceptual model to examine the ways in which parental unauthorized status affects the millions of children, adolescents and young adults caught in the labyrinth of uncertainty that characterizes the lives of children in mixed-status families. Carola Suárez-Orozco, Hirokazu Yoshikawa, Robert T. Teranishi, and Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco found a consistent pattern: the effects of unauthorized status on development across the life span are uniformly negative, with millions of U.S. children and youth at risk of lower educational performance, economic stagnation, blocked mobility and ambiguous belonging. In all, the data suggest an alarming psychological formation.

The effects of unauthorized status on development across the life span are uniformly negative, with millions of U.S. children and youth at risk of lower educational performance, economic stagnation, blocked mobility and ambiguous belonging.

Drawing on interviews with 91 parents and 110 children in 80 households, sociologist Joanna Dreby reveals that children in Mexican immigrant families (regardless of their legal status) express fear and anxiety about potential family separations, leading her to suggest that children disproportionally shoulder the burden of deportation.[29] Not only are children's families "ripped apart" by deportation policy, but also children come to fear familial separation and distrust law enforcement officials.[30]

Cecilia Menjivar, author of *Fragmented Ties: Salvadoran Immigrant Networks in America,* and Leisy J. Abrego, author of *Sacrificing Families: Navigating Laws, Labor, and Love Across Borders*, explore the negative consequences of immigration enforcement

policies on immigrant households.[31] Based on 200 interviews conducted between 1998 and 2010 with Central American immigrants in Los Angeles and Phoenix and in sending communities, this study found that pervasive enforcement that leads to detention and deportation generated "normalized but cumulative injurious effects" in work, family and school. Some of those effects include restricted social integration and impeded upward mobility. In a recent education study funded by the National Science Foundation and the Spencer Foundation, Sarah Gallo of Ohio State University found that the threat of deportation can produce a change in family dynamics with children serving as brokers or mediators between law enforcement and their parents.[32] Citizen children of non-citizen parents come to feel unsafe, develop a sense of non-belonging, and become fearful of U.S. institutions.

A recent UCLA study of a related population—undocumented youth who were brought to the United States as children and are now in college—found very high levels of anxiety due to fears of deportation. President Obama created a temporary relief program for this segment on the unauthorized population in 2012, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and broadened it as part of the administrative relief announced in November 2014. More than two million people fit into this category, according to the Migration Policy Institute, or potentially could if they met the educational requirements and age past the minimum requirement of being fifteen years old.[33]

The UndocuScholars Project at UCLA conducted a survey of 909 undocumented undergraduates in 2014 and found that more than three-quarters expressed worries about being deported and more than half reported knowing someone who had been deported. These worries and other aspects of the insecurity that comes from being unauthorized translated into measurable consequences for the respondents' health. Among male subjects 28.5 percent produced scores on a standard anxiety screening that were above the cutoff for a clinical diagnosis; for females, it was 36.7 percent. In comparison, the shares in a population of college students with no reason to fear deportation would be 4 percent and 9 percent, respectively.[34]

Many of these DACA youths are growing up in households with younger siblings who were born in the United States, and thus the psychological stresses described in this report invariably affect millions of native-born Americans. Both populations—the early childhood arrivals who are undocumented and their U.S.-born siblings—would see a major source of anxiety relieved under President Obama's administrative relief programs.

F) Positive effects of legalization

Notwithstanding the severity of the effects described above, the available research also shows that granting legal status to parents can reverse the harm imposed on their children. Most of these studies have examined the effects of the amnesty programs that were part of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. More recent studies have assessed the early impact of DACA on childhood arrivals.

The most direct finding of a benefit to children comes from the IIMMLA study and relates to deficits in the years of schooling for the children of unauthorized immigrants. Led by researchers at the University of California, Irvine, the study included a survey in the Los Angeles area of nearly five thousand young adults who were the children of immigrants. Supported by a $1.7 million grant from the Russell Sage Foundation in 2004, the survey produced a unique glimpse at the effects of legalization nearly twenty years after the fact. The IIMMLA study concluded that the children of legalized parents had significantly better educational outcomes than the children of parents who remained unauthorized. Specifically, nearly 43 percent of the respondents whose father had become a legal permanent resident through the 1986 amnesties had received a college degree or some college education. Meanwhile, among young people whose father had remained unauthorized only 14 percent achieved that level of education. An even higher divided was apparent among the children of amnesty beneficiaries who had gone on to become U.S. citizens: 52 percent of them made it to college.[35]

The IIMMLA study concluded that the children of legalized parents had significantly better educational outcomes than the children of parents who remained unauthorized.

A similar finding emerged from a qualitative study by Jody Agius Vallejo, a sociologist at the University of Southern California who conducted extensive interviews with the adult children of Mexican immigrants in the Los Angeles area. As detailed in her 2012 book, *Barrios to Burbs: The Making of the Mexican American Middle Class*, legalization of parents when their children are young has significant effects on the economic mobility that those children are able to achieve as adults. Her research finds evidence of quicker and more successful ascension into the middle class among individuals who were preadolescents when their parents attained legal status than among their counterparts whose parents remained undocumented.[36]

Meanwhile recent studies of the 2012 administrative relief for childhood arrivals, DACA, show clearly the benefits that accrue rapidly to individuals gaining legal status. This research offers verification in a current context of the studies cited above on the effects of legalization. If the president's 2014 administrative relief were enacted, the parents of U.S. citizen children would experience a similar lift and the benefits would accrue to their children.

For example, a study conducted by researchers at the University of California, San Diego found that 79 percent of DACA beneficiaries reported they were earning more and

experiencing greater financial independence within a year of gaining permission to work legally. Also, 45 percent reported an increased sense of belonging in the United States even though their legal status was only temporary.[37]

The UCLA study of childhood arrivals by the UndocuScholars Project found that 85.5 percent of students with DACA reported a positive impact on their education. DACA recipients indicated that they had enjoyed higher rates of working and greater success obtaining scholarships and internships since gaining legal status.[38]

WHY DOES LEGALIZATION BRING THESE CHANGES?

Research cited earlier in this report points to the mechanisms by which a parent's legalization can bring improvement in children's life trajectories. Most simply, legalization eliminates the fear and anxiety that can pervade households threatened with the deportation of a parent. Like removing a hobble, this allows a child to ascend developmentally, psychologically and in educational attainment. In addition to the psychological effects, legalization removes the barriers to economic opportunity and social integration that arise from unauthorized status.

Even a temporary work permit can set in motion a process that brings economic benefits first to the immigrants, in the form of higher wages, and then to the public sector, in the form of higher tax revenue, and then to the nation as a whole, in the form of a more productive labor force. Permission to work of the sort envisioned in the president's executive action provides unauthorized immigrants with a shield against workplace exploitation and the freedom to move across the labor market to find work that best suits their skills.

Most simply, legalization eliminates the fear and anxiety that can pervade households threatened with the deportation of a parent. Like removing a hobble, this allows a child to ascend developmentally, psychologically and in educational attainment.

In his analysis of the 1988 and 1992 Legalized Population Survey of beneficiaries of the Immigration Reform and Control Act amnesties, University of Oregon sociologist Michael Bernabé Aguilar found that undocumented men and women experienced significant improvement in labor market outcomes after the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act in 1986, and women experienced a distinctly higher return on their education.[39] Research by the Center for American Progress estimates that temporary work permits would produce increased earnings of about 8.5 percent and that the gains would be even higher—around 11 percent—for full legalization.[40]

In rural occupations, such as agricultural work, post-legalization wage gains are moderate but workers get access to other forms of compensation. Using data from the

National Agricultural Workers survey, researchers Ivan T. Kandilov and Amy M. G. Kandilov found that becoming legal permanent residents increases agricultural workers' wages by a modest amount, around 5 percent. Greater gains are made when workers are granted rights to access other forms of compensation, including employer-sponsored health insurance.[41]

Research by Pia Orrenius, a research officer and senior economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, alongside Madeline Zavodny, professor of economics at Agnes Scott College, found that while legalization's most immediate benefits accrue to the immigrants who gain legal status and their families, economic benefits also accrue to society at large. Legalized immigrant workers may come out of the shadows and make larger contributions to income and payroll tax revenue. Sales tax revenue may also increase as higher wages boost immigrants' purchasing power. Finally, children benefit from parents' eligibility to receive support such as refundable tax credits, medical care and disability benefits. During the crucial years when the children of immigrants are raising their own children, less of their income will have to go toward helping their parents.[42]

CONCLUSION

Only one assertion in the immigration policy debate draws unanimous agreement: the endlessly repeated statement that the system is broken. A second assertion worthy of the same accord is that the U.S. citizen children of unauthorized migrants are the most innocent of the many victims of that broken system. They constitute a distinct class of individuals who are defined not by how they have violated regulations but by the fact that the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees them citizenship, due process and equal protection.

Moreover, existing immigration law grants them the eventual certainty of living peacefully with their parents in the country of their birth. An immediate family tie to a U.S. citizen has been recognized as perhaps the strongest justification for legal admission since the last great revision of the nation's immigration laws in 1965. Indeed, as soon as those children turn twenty-one, they will be able to petition for their parents' admission as legal permanent residents. In taking executive action to lift the threat of deportation from these parents and giving them work permits, President Obama would merely be advancing them a benefit that their children will be able to claim for them at a future date. But to be clear, what the president is proposing is only a temporary fix, a deferral of deportation for three years. A permanent fix requires the enactment of legislation that creates a full legalization program.

The fact that so many American children are at risk because of their parents' immigration status is testimony to how long and how badly the immigration system has been broken. But they are not merely the living legacy of past mistakes. As the research presented here documents in myriad ways, this is a category of Americans who are being penalized, severely penalized, every day because their government cannot manage to regulate immigration. If Congress and the president cannot agree on how to fix the system, they can agree to lift this penalty while they figure it out. Surely policy makers can agree that the national interests are harmed by condemning 7 percent of the school-aged population to psychological troubles and reduced educational achievement.

Unauthorized migrants could be characterized as enjoying benefits they do not deserve simply by being in this country. That cannot be said for these children. Through no fault of their own, they are suffering emotional hurt, developmental losses and harm to their life prospects. Their parents will be faulted by some for being in this country without proper immigration status. Be that as it may, the American sense of fairness and the American system of justice have long embraced the notion that the "sins of the father" are not visited on the children. Reasonable minds can debate whether there is blame to attach to the parents. There is no reasonable case to be made for punishing their U.S. citizen children. Yet, every day they are being punished.

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