

Thank you. I would like to thank Congressman Welch for his tireless advocacy in behalf of dreamers and Vermonters, as well as the rest of the VT delegation. Senator Leahy gave a powerful and passionate speech this past week in defense of DACA and I know they have all been working diligently on this issue. I would like to thank President Sullivan for his support of all UVM students alike, and finally thank everyone at the Robert Larner College of Medicine for their friendship, trust, and support.

I am here today because I want to share my story. I have heard from the attorney generals that oppose DACA that their opposition is not to me, that the only thing that matters in America is process but I believe that a more important question is whether or not our current immigration policies reflect the values of America, and the only way to find out is if you know the human story of DACA.

So here is my story: My name is Juan Conde. I was born in Mexico. When I was a child, around 9 years old, my mother brought my brother and me to live in the United States. She based her decision on nothing more than the simple belief that in this great nation we would have better lives. You have to forgive my mother, you see, she just happened to believe in the American dream. This belief did not arise from empty air, when my mother was growing up my grandfather fill her head with ideas of what America was, of what America could be. He was a migrant farm worker who worked tirelessly in the fields of TX to provide for his family, he became a resident of this great nation and went on to Chicago to work on the steel foundries helping to build America. My mother did not need my grandfather to tell her what she could with her own eyes see, that in America it did not matter who you were born as, what matter was that with hard work, dedication, and grit you could accomplish anything you dreamt of. Sadly, before my grandfather could give that residency to my mother he tragically passed away from a heart attack, and a link was broken. My mother returned to Mexico, but she never forgot that great nation of her youth and she decided to bring my brother and I here.

We arrived to this new land, and we learned to speak a new language, to sing the Star-Spangled Banner, and to call this our home. We also learned what it meant to be undocumented, when it was time to go to college I had fears that restrictions would prevent me from getting an education. But even in TX, conservative, don't tread on me TX, this was never a political issue it was a matter of basic human decency and fairness and TX at that time passed what became known as the TX dream act. They looked to us and said: son, in America, we do not hold children accountable for the sins of their parents, and they told us if you want to earn an education we will not stop you. And so, earn I did, obtaining my B.S. in both Chemistry and Biomedical Science. It was my dream to become a physician because I believed that medicine is the noblest of professions, with the ability to provide comfort, to stop pain, and to help others. Sadly, it was not possible at that time to even enroll in medical school. It was at this time that my mother, who brought us here, who pushed us to embrace America, lost her battle to cancer. My mother's death and my setback in medicine made me think of what I wanted to do with my life. In America, we never wallow in self-pity, we take our hits, pull ourselves by our bootstraps and continue on. And so, I decided that if the path to medicine was blocked that I would dedicate my life to research, that I would enter the fight against cancer by exploring the mechanisms of the

disease that claimed my mother's life. I did so by researching apoptosis and earning my MS in Chemistry and then by earning my doctorate degree, researching tobacco smoke carcinogenesis. Then something amazing happened, DACA happened. DACA, lifted that long veil of deportation from my shoulders but it did more than that, what DACA meant for me, it meant that America still believed in the strength of dreams, that my country had a place for me here. And so finally I undertook that last step in my training to finally become a physician so that in the future I could combine my training as a scientist and physician to help those battling that emperor of all maladies, cancer.

This is my story, it is by all accounts not unique, if you so wish to listen, there are 800 thousand DACA stories just like mine. And if you listen closely you will find why this story resonates with you, why it is so familiar to anyone here, you can feel the ghost of this dream in every family in America. Go to any attic, explore any family tree, or ask any of your elders and they will tell you that this basic dream was not dreamt by me, it was not dreamt by my mother or my grandfather, it was "dreamt by those who sailed the early seas, those who left dark Ireland's shore, and Poland's plain, and England's grassy fields or who were torn from Black Africa's shore" to build what Langston Hughes called the homeland of the free.

Someone asked me earlier in the week whether I was afraid to reveal myself. I will tell them that I am tired of being afraid. This is my home, the American people are my people, and I know the hearts of the American people. I know that though we worry about the future there are no people more kind and brave and true. I know they still believe that America is that shining city in the hill, and that the promise of the American dream is through all these years still alive and strong because only in America could my story be true. My story is not yet complete, but I rest with confidence knowing that it is the American people who will get to decide on how it ends. Thank you for listening, and may God bless the United States of America.