

After the Supreme Court's DACA/DAPA decision

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June 27, 2016

In the latest issue of the *Century*, I [profiled](#) a family awaiting the Supreme Court's ruling on President Obama's expansion of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and its extension to DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents). On Thursday, the Supreme Court voted in a 4-4 tie, which means that the case reverts to the lower court ruling, against the program.

This is a setback for millions of people who have raised their children in this country and for young people who are ready to plan and enact their futures. But no matter what the Supreme Court decided, DACA and DAPA were mere band-aids on the infected wound caused by the inability of the legislative branch to enact comprehensive immigration reform. They would have been better than nothing, but they were hardly a solution.

DACA and DAPA are not dead. They return to the federal courts for a trial on their merits. But attention now turns to the presidential election, in which immigration policy will be a central theme. The stakes have perhaps never been higher for how we will define ourselves as a nation, how we will rectify the failures of the past, and how we will attempt to envision the future.

Another question: how can we change the way we talk about immigration in this country? How do we find a conversation that goes beyond "immigration violators" vs. "deferred dreams"? With record numbers of people all over the world displaced by war, violence, and economic despair, this isn't a conversation that is going to go away. Human beings are not going to stop seeking ways out of disaster.

I asked Brayhan, the subject of my profile in the magazine, why he was continuing his conversation with me despite the potential threat to him. He said, "When people start talking about immigrants, I want them to know who they are talking about." I think we might at least start by taking his advice. Let every word we say about immigrants be rooted in some kind of personal experience. Let's know our neighbors before we presume to judge them.