

President Obama's Remarks to NALEO Conference

June 23, 2012

Remarks on YouTube:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YvyhigDK-I&feature=player_embedded

President Obama visited the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Annual Conference yesterday to [talk about immigration reform](#), and the way forward for the Latino community:

“You and I both know one of America’s greatest strengths has always been our ability to attract talented, hardworking people who believe in this country, who want to help make it stronger. That’s what keeps us young. That’s what keeps us dynamic and energized. That’s what makes us who we are.

“But our current immigration system doesn’t reflect those values. It allows the best and brightest to study here, but then tells them to leave, start companies somewhere else. It punishes immigrants and businesses who play by the rules, and fails to address the fact that there are too many who don’t. It separates families and it denies innocent young people the chance to earn an education or serve in the uniform of the country they love.

“In the face of a Congress that refuses to do anything on immigration, I’ve said that I’ll take action wherever I can. So my administration has been doing what we can, without the help in Congress, for more than three years now. And last week, we took another step. On Friday, we announced that we’re lifting the shadow of deportation from deserving young people who were brought to this country as children.

“We should have passed the DREAM Act a long time ago. It was written by members of both parties. When it came up for a vote a year and a half ago, Republicans in Congress blocked it. The bill hadn’t changed. The need hadn’t changed. The only thing that had changed was politics ... And I refused to keep looking young people in the eye, deserving young people in the eye, and tell them, tough luck, the politics is too hard.

“I’ve met these young people all across the country. They’re studying in our schools. They’re playing with our children, pledging allegiance to our flag, hoping to serve our country. They are Americans in their hearts, in their minds. They are Americans through and through—in every single way but on paper. And all they want is to go to college and give back to the country they love. So lifting the shadow of deportation and giving them a reason to hope—that was the right thing to do. It was the right thing to do.

“It’s not amnesty. It falls short of where we need to be—a path to citizenship. It’s not a permanent fix. This is a temporary measure that lets us focus our resources wisely while offering some justice to these young people. But it’s precisely because it’s temporary, Congress still

needs to come up with a long-term immigration solution—rather than argue that we did this the wrong way or for the wrong reasons.

“So to those who are saying Congress should be the one to fix this—absolutely. For those who say we should do this in a bipartisan fashion—absolutely. My door has been open for three and a half years. They know where to find me.”