

Irene Bueno

11/04/99 07:03:56 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Andy Rotherham/OPD/EOP

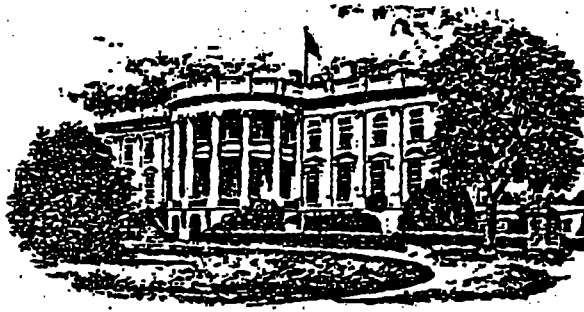
cc:

Subject: Letter

(checked)

I would like you to review a letter and response dealing with undocumented kids who can't get into college b/c they don't have a social security number. My sense from reading the letters is that they cannot get student loans b/c they do not have a ssn since they are undocumented. Correspondence has drafted a response that does not say much but please review the letter and the draft response and let me know if you have anything to add.

Thanks.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

FACSIMILE / MEMO FROM: Renee Sagiv
OFFICE OF PRESIDENTIAL LETTERS AND MESSAGES
OLD EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 93

VOICE: (202) 456-5519

FAX: (202) 456-5426

NUMBER OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER): 7

DATE: 11/1

TO: Genie Chough cc: IB

VOICE: 65566

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☐ FOR YOUR ACTION

☒ INCOMING LETTER(S) FROM:

RE: children of illegal immigrants

☒ FOR YOUR REVIEW / APPROVAL

☒ PER MY E-MAIL OR VOICE-MAIL MESSAGE TO YOU

☐ PER YOUR REQUEST

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

My draft response is specifically for Mr. Anderock's letter, but it can be the basis for both. I got the language from letters to people who wrote about the same concerns, but for legal immigrants, so it might have to be toned down some. Call me if you have any questions.

Thanks!

DRAFT OF BC LETTER

INITIALS: BC /rms	DOCUMENT NAME: \\s_who00010\dos\public\letter\slr\p\rms \andereck scott rms.doc
DRAFT / LETTER DATE: November 1, 1999	CORRESPONDENCE #: 7030250
CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESSED TO: Mr. Scott D. Andereck Manual Arts High School 4131 South Vermont Avenue Los Angeles, California 90037	CC:

Dear Scott:

Thank you for your moving letter. I understand your concerns about young people like Karla who have worked hard and seek a quality education, and I regret that I was unable to respond sooner. I've shared your correspondence with members of my staff in the Domestic Policy Council and with Commissioner Meissner of Immigration and Naturalization Services. Be assured that your views will be carefully considered.

Education is the classic vehicle of the American Dream. All immigrants have looked to education and learning as a way to come to this country and make it on their own. I am proud of the work my Administration has done to make college more affordable and accessible, and I remain committed to increasing access to post-secondary education and providing greater opportunities to everyone who embraces the American Dream of higher education and a better life.

I'm glad you took the time to write. Best wishes.

Alan Seigel
919 Chattanooga Avenue
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272
310-454-1265
aseigel@gte.net

Dear Mr. President,

Although the American Dream is alive and well for most Americans, there is one segment of the population, that can not help viewing this dream more as a nightmare. This is a group of students who, through no fault of their own, are denied the vision solely because their parents entered the United States illegally and they are unable to legally procure a social security number that is the key to their future. These students have done everything they are supposed to do to become productive, contributing citizens of this great country: they go to school, maintain almost perfect attendance, are star performers within the schools--often outranking their 'citizen peer' counterparts, they have become bilingual--proficient in their native language and in English, they have lived by the laws of the land, they have paid their share of taxes, they have dared to dream, they have applied to and have been accepted into some of the finest colleges the United States has to offer. Unfortunately, due to the decisions their parents made in merely trying to better their own lives--entering the great United States without proper papers--they are being denied the opportunity to attend those colleges, to work, to contribute to the society they so desperately want to be a part of. It is not the grades or the SAT scores --it is their inability to garner financial aid.

Many of these students were babies when their parents came to the U.S. to escape the harshness of poverty that we in the U.S. can only imagine. They are Americans in every sense of the word, except that they have been denied the opportunity to formally become residents or citizens. For many, the United States is the only country they know. Their families and friends are all in the United States, those remaining behind are mere strangers. As the idealistic and hopeful words expressed in their graduation speeches begin to fade, so do their dreams. At a time in their lives when they should be exploring all the avenues, promises and dreams that they can travel, their journeys are suddenly cut short by this heinous roadblock in their way.

The motto of Manual Arts High School, the inner city Los Angeles school in which I teach, is "It can be done!" From ninth grade onward, these words echo through the halls--they punctuate the educational and extracurricular activities--they provide the mission for the future. Although some students take these words for granted, there are other students who actually live them. For some of these students, however, the words are empty. Imagine, Mr. President, going through high school, challenging yourself and in some cases your family, to take the most challenging courses--AP and Honors courses, enrolling yourself in a Magnet Program because "learning looked like so much fun", not being able to do your homework until the family goes to bed so you can have a quiet place to study, resisting the lure of the street gangs that permeate

their neighborhoods to join the ranks of ephebians, thespians, valedictorians and salutatorians, resisting the entreaties of the families to miss school to go to help the family by babysitting or going to work with a parent. Then, Mr. President, imagine the end of your high school senior year, acceptances in hand, the joy of graduating--in some cases the first in a family to be able to go to college--only to find out that it can't happen because, for some reason, the INS forms were not filled out right, or the immigration advisor took their hard-earned money and gave nothing in return (money that could have gone toward tuition), or the INS backlog will add years to the process, or that the words of Emma Lazarus' poem as inscribed on the Statue of Liberty are not really true:

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

Many settle for the more affordable community college system. However, after 2 years some of America's best and brightest have no more options: legally they can not work, and they can not transfer to 4 year institutions. True, the group of teenagers of which I write do not represent a large voting bloc, however they do represent everything that should be right about America.

Sincerely,



Alan Seigel
Teacher
Manual Arts High School
Academy of Finance

Septi Anderack

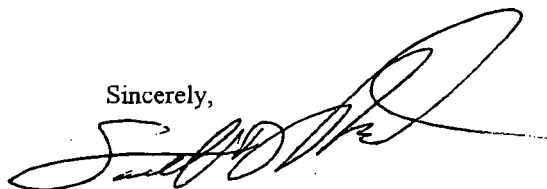
Mr. President,

As a teacher in the inner city of Los Angeles for the past 13 years my chief purpose has been to prepare all my students to be upstanding and productive citizens of this great country. The operative word is "all;" I believe it would be unethical and unconscionable not to give all students an equal opportunity to be successful. Some of the students in my Advanced Placement United States History and Academy of Finance classes face additional obstacles that lead them down the path of frustration, to a college "not of their choice," without scholarship support, having to pay higher tuition, and without access to jobs. These students were the highest achievers in their class yet they had to look on as other, less deserving students got the internships, scholarships, and acceptances. Despite the fact that they have gone through the entire educational system, done superior academic work, were models of mature behavior, possess more knowledge about the history, heritage and government of this country than most Americans they are continually denied equal access to "Life's Chances." Through no fault of their own they have continually done the "right things," worked extremely hard without complaint and all along they believed they were part of that "American Dream." And why not? These students can proudly recite the Declaration of Independence or the Gettysburg Address and they were taught that the ideals they embodied were sacred and undeniable; but in their case that's a lie and sometimes I feel like a hypocrite for encouraging my students to believe in these ideals. When it comes right down to it these students will be denied their dreams because of the choices their parents were forced to make. To punish the children for circumstances beyond their control is inhumane. The students to which I refer are the "top of the line" academically, have overcome repeated obstacles, and are the finest of human beings. These young people should not be made to suffer for the failure of their parents in obtaining residency or citizenship; the very thing to which they aspire.

My words are horribly inadequate in trying to describe the tears of frustration that I have seen in my brilliant students when they learn that all they have worked so hard for has come to a crashing halt. The frustration, the "surrender," and the depression that comes from an oppressive system that doesn't seem to care is something that defies description. To make it more real and human we need only to examine the case of one superior student and special person, Karla Martinez. Karla's parents are Salvadoran and Mexican who because of various socio-economic circumstances were forced to immigrate to America when Karla was very young. Karla is exceptionally bright and determined and year after year she worked hard to acquire a new language; she sought to fit in. Karla possesses an amazing work ethic so by the time she reached High School she had managed to acquire all the fundamentals required to achieve at a higher level while avoiding all the traps and pitfalls of the inner city. Just recently she completed four years of amazing work and growth at Manual Arts College Preparatory Magnet. While in high school she challenged herself by taking every A.P. course imaginable including my A.P. United States History class. She attended classes after school and on Saturday in order to properly prepare for the A.P. exam. Not only did she finish second in her class but by making the ultimate in sacrifices she passed the A.P. exam. She has developed a deep love, respect, and understanding for America and its history. Her hero is Martin Luther King Jr. because of his struggle for justice. Karla leaves Manual Arts with a 3.6 GPA, a host of scholarships, and the respect and recommendations of her teachers and peers. She was accepted at UCLA because of that outstanding body of academic work and an outstanding essay; so you say to yourself she got what she deserved and America truly is the land of opportunity, right? Well, not so fast. You see, Karla's parents have a "conditional residency" status. After many trips to the INS and to lawyers, Karla has learned what that means for her; bottom line, she won't be going to UCLA. Because her parents were duped by lawyers, because the bureaucracy works painfully slow, and because the system doesn't care she will be denied her dream. Langston Hughes had it right when he asked "what happens to a dream deferred?" For Karla it has led to a loss of hope, a cynicism about America and what it stands for, and a belief that she is incapable of making positive changes in the system. Her dream will be deferred and we "Americans" will not maximize the full and creative talents of a very gifted, compassionate, and hard working young person. This is an inexcusable waste of talent.

Mr. President, I voted for you because you struck me as a person who cares about the plight of the less fortunate. You are in a rare position indeed since you have the power to make dreams come true through legislative reality. I humbly propose that you take the story of Karla Martinez and a host of others just like her into consideration. In every sense of the word students like Karla are "Americans." It amazes me that just through luck and circumstances many are born in this country and as such are automatically entitled to citizenship and all the rights it entails yet they in reality know little about their country. Yet Karla and many others like her work incredibly hard to show their worth and to become citizens and when the goal is within their reach it is snatched away by a seemingly insensitive government. It seems to me that children of noncitizens who have shown merit in the academic system deserve "special consideration." That in fact these students should be granted citizenship status despite the status of their parents and it should be done expeditiously so as not to hinder their transition to college. These are exactly the type of people we want as citizens because they value what it means and they have proved over and over that they are deserving of the opportunities that citizenship affords. Is there not anything that can be done?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott D. Andereck', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Scott D. Andereck
Teacher- Manual Arts College Prep Magnet
Coordinator- Academy of Finance



Tanya E. Martin
06/07/99 02:41:22 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Irene Bueno/OPD/EOP@EOP, Bethany Little/OPD/EOP@EOP, Jonathan H. Schnur/OPD/EOP@EOP

CC:

Subject: Immigrant High School

Article from Phil Inquirer. We thought about some policy initiatives around immigrant transition schools last year, but it didn't go anywhere. I'd be interested in your thoughts on this.

English lessons -- and life lessons

Immigrant teens tackle the language and adolescence at a special school.

By Monica Rhor
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

The topic was injustice.

And Chealen Tav, 18, had called her essay "The True Story."

"When I was in my country, Cambodia, there was a boy named Tait," she began, describing how the boy was hit by a car, taken to a hospital and left to die because doctors thought he was too poor to pay for treatment.

"After this happened, when my mother went anywhere, if she saw somebody like this boy, she took him to the hospital and paid money for him. . . . I will do the same thing."

Her classmates jockeyed to give their opinions on the essay, raising their hands eagerly, calling out "Me! Me!"

In any other classroom, this might have been an ordinary assignment. But nothing in Robin Roy's class is ordinary.

Her 16 students come from seven different countries. Most have been here less than a year. All arrived knowing little if any English.

To the school district they are known as "newcomers" -- and their classroom is part of the Philadelphia School District's effort to accommodate a growing population of immigrant students. About 20

percent of the district's 217,000 students are immigrants or are from Puerto Rico, speaking more than 70 languages. About 11,000 are in English as Second Language or bilingual classes. The rest know enough English to get by in regular classes.

For the last two years, the Newcomer Center behind South Philadelphia High School has served as a bridge for newly arrived high school-age immigrants. Here, about 30 students from 14 countries -- including Haiti, Bangladesh, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Liberia and Cambodia -- receive a crash course in English, while earning high school credits.

In this setting, ordinary assignments take on new meaning. On this recent morning, these students could all offer up personal experiences with injustice or visions of extreme poverty.

Jean Wesner Guilloux, 15, who arrived from Haiti eight months ago, said that doctors in his country "take care of the rich because they want money."

"In my country, too," chimed in Fatmata Dabo, 15, from Guinea.

"I saw in my country many poor people sleeping on the floor because they don't have a bed or anything," added Anwara Begum Meah, 18, who came from Bangladesh 11 months ago.

With each word spoken, each sentence cobbled together correctly, each meaning grasped, the students were taking a step forward into their new lives in this country.

English lessons are just part of the curriculum. For these young people, the normal pangs of growing up are complicated by the jolt of emigrating to a new country.

Like teenagers everywhere, they want to fit in. But how do you fit in when the landscape has suddenly changed and the only map is in a foreign language?

"They are dealing with emotional stuff, cultural stuff, language stuff. That's a lot," said Roy, one of the center's three teachers. "This is a really good place to be supported and work out those issues before going on to a bigger place."

Students spend a year to 18 months learning basic English before transferring to a neighborhood high school. Most live in West or Southwest Philadelphia and transfer to Bartram High School.

The center is the young people's cocoon -- protected, nurturing and intimate. Educational clutter fills the center's two classrooms, three offices and small entry. A banner proclaims: "We are all one family under the same sky."

Roy's office is stocked with crafts from all over the world -- a Hmong weaving, an African batik print, Native American kachina dolls. Walls

are decorated with international flags and artwork.

The classes are kept small. And the atmosphere is informal, with students split into two groups according to their English skills, then shifted as they improve.

The teachers -- Roy, Sandy Stango and Wilda Hayward -- are often astounded by how quickly the students improve. Guilloux, one of several Haitian students, arrived knowing virtually no English, Roy said.

"He's one of our prize students," she said. "You could watch the wheels turning and know he would be able to speak soon."

Guilloux shrugs. "For me, English is not so hard," he says.

Meah admits her struggle.

"The first month, I did not know what anyone was saying," said Meah, who wears a veil and delicate pearl nose ring. "Now I learn more and more."

Meah picks up much of her English from television shows. Her favorites are Young Hercules; Xena, the Warrior Princess; and The Power Rangers.

Television, it seems, tutors many newcomers.

In Stango's grammar class, the students played the roles of game show contestants, trying to match irregular verbs with their conjugated forms.

A correct answer netted high fives and cheers of "Big money! Big money!"

A wrong answer resulted in a chorus of buzzer sounds and chants of "Come back next week."

The students' progress is all the more remarkable because of the obstacles they must overcome, Roy said.

Some arrive with no schooling at all. Others have spent years in refugee camps. Many, raised by grandparents in their homelands, have just been reunited with fathers or mothers they barely remember.

"They're like picture brides," Roy said. "They come with a picture and when you ask, who's your father? They point to the picture. And the fathers come with pictures of the child."

The Newcomer Center teachers often serve as guides for the students' families, connecting them with translators, community organizations and other social service agencies. Since many students arrive without proper immunizations, Stango makes sure they get the necessary follow-ups.

"In a bigger high school, that wouldn't be possible," Roy said. "Here, we

see them every day. We can ask them three times a week if they've gone to the doctor."

For the students, the Newcomer Center also is a safety zone where they can practice U.S. culture without fear.

Before coming to this country, Meah said, she often wondered what America was like. She says she discovered a place of freedom. "The . . . women are not free," she said of her homeland. "In America, men and women are the same."

For some of her classmates, the reality of this country did not match their imaginings. Fatmata Dabo thought everyone in the United States had "a lot of cars and a lot of money."

Newcomers eat lunch with South Philadelphia High students, allowing them to interact with and observe U.S. teenagers. They often return with questions.

"If someone makes a rude remark, they don't know how rude it is, or if it is really rude," Roy said. "They are turned off by the disrespect other students show their teachers and the disrespect they show each other."

True, Guilloux said.

"In my country, when the teacher teaches, you can raise your hand. Here, when the teacher talks, they talk, too."

Still, the Newcomer students see much that they wish to emulate. They often rehearse American teenage idioms with each other. "I don't think so" is a favorite. "Know what I mean?" is another.

They repeat the phrases again and again, until they sound just like their American counterparts.

Legalization

DOL

- John Fraset
- Earl Gohl

INS

- Bob Bach

USDA

- Linda Delgado – Dep Sec Rominger's office

OMB

- Barbara Chow
- Larry Matlock
- Darryl Parks

WH

- Janet Murguia (Erica Morris)
- Caroline Fredrickson
- Brian Kennedy
- Maritza Rivera