

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 110527)

RESOLUTION

Urging the United States Department of Homeland Security to cease deportation proceedings against Zulma Villatoro, a young woman who would qualify for legal permanent residency under the proposed federal DREAM Act.

WHEREAS, Zulma Villatoro is a young woman who was born in Guatemala, who was brought to the United States in 1997 by her parents when she was a fourteen-year-old child, and who has lived in Chester, Pennsylvania ever since; and

WHEREAS, Zulma's parents have consistently worked in good faith to adjust their daughter's immigration status and, although her parents are now legal permanent residents of the United States and her two younger brothers are citizens, Zulma is currently under threat of deportation due to a lawyer's mistake and the unreasonable and unjust immigration laws that apply to her case; and

WHEREAS, Zulma is deeply invested in her Pennsylvania community, where she has attended school and continues to work, attend religious services, and raise her four-year-old daughter, Reina, a United States citizen, and so would face profound dislocation if forced to return to the country of her birth; and

WHEREAS, Deportation would force Zulma, who is expecting a second child, to choose between keeping her family together and her children's safety; when speaking to a reporter recently about the prospect of leaving her daughter to be cared for by family Zulma poignantly said, "She is my heart. When I look at her sleeping, I think, 'What will happen to her?' She doesn't know anything. When she sees me crying, I just tell her I have a headache."; and

WHEREAS, The proposed federal DREAM Act would create a path to legal permanent residency for young adults like Zulma, who were brought to the United States by their parents and meet other conditions concerning good moral character and education or military service, a bill which has received majority support in both houses of Congress; and

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WHEREAS, The Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has asserted that deporting DREAM-eligible youth is not a priority given more pressing immigration enforcement needs, and President Barack Obama has affirmed that the federal government is “[f]ocusing our limited resources and people on violent offenders and people convicted of crimes – not families, not just folks who are just looking to scrape together an income”; and

WHEREAS, ICE is invested with discretion not to pursue, or to defer, immigration enforcement when the interest served by deportation is not substantial or is outweighed by considerations including the presence of sympathetic factors, many of which are evident in Zulma's case as outlined above; and

WHEREAS, Above all, Zulma exemplifies what it means to be an American, and should be allowed to continue to pursue her dreams and build her growing family close to her loved ones, in the place she knows as her home; therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY PHILADELPHIA, That we urge the United States Department of Homeland Security to cease deportation proceedings against Zulma Villatoro, a young woman who would qualify for legal permanent residency under the proposed federal DREAM Act.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Homeland Security, and John Morton, Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security and Director of ICE.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-third of June, 2011.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Sanchez and Kenney

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Sanchez, Kenney, Green, DiCicco, Jones, Blackwell, Goode, Reynolds Brown, Greenlee, Krajewski, Tasco, Clarke, Miller, O'Neill, Kelly and Rizzo