# Equity Issues in Systems Change Work:
*Supporting Immigrant Students & Undocumented Students*

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*#ByAllMeansHGSE*

# Supporting Immigrant Students and Undocumented Students:

## *Understanding Vulnerability in a New Policy Context*
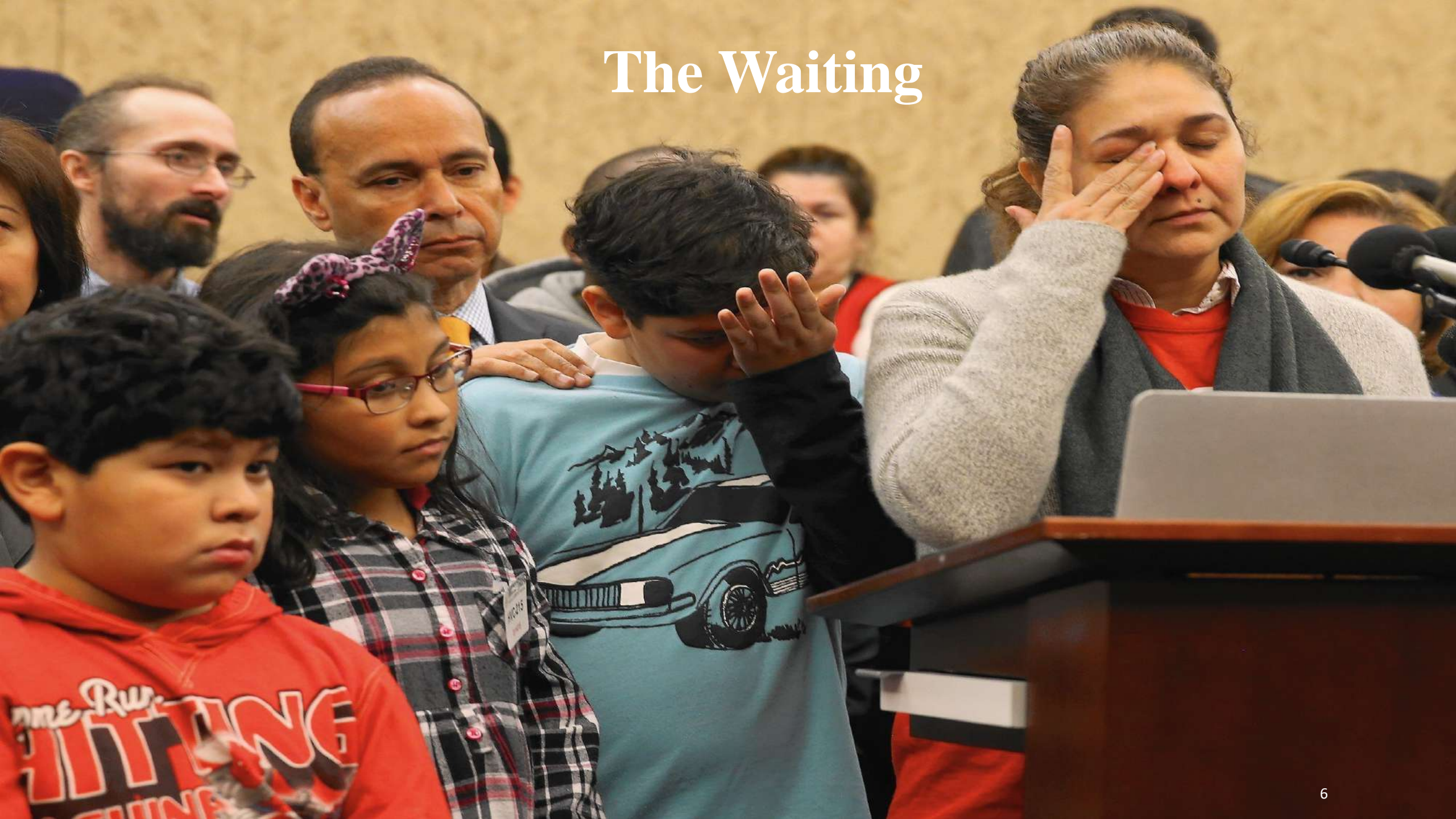
Roberto G. Gonzales, Ph.D.
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# Time

# Congressional Inactivity

"Enforcement on Steroids"

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# The Waiting

# Undocumented Settlement: A New Era of Migration



- More than 16.6 million people live in mixed-status families where at least one undocumented immigrant resides
- 11.3 million people are undocumented
- Within these families, more than 2.1 million are undocumented but have lived in the United States since childhood
- 4.5 million are U.S. citizens
- More than 500,000 children have resettled to Mexico

# *1982 Plyler v. Doe*: Partial Integration

- Provided legal access to K-12 schools

- Failed to address education **beyond** high school

- Laws allow undocumented children to go to school, but they **cannot legally** work, vote, travel outside of the country, receive financial aid for college, or drive in most states

- Thus, tens of thousands leave high schools every year encountering uncertain futures

# Collateral Damage & Trend Toward Greater Enforcement



1. American-born children with undocumented parents
2. DACA beneficiaries
3. Undocumented children who do not have DACA
4. Return migrants (1.5 and 2$^{nd}$ generation)
5. Unaccompanied Minors and Refugee Youth

# Local Contours Shaping Divergent Experiences

- State and local policies
    - Immigration enforcement
    - Curbed Access to Higher Education &Professional Licensure

- Local reception
    - Racisms and prejudice
    - Lack of racial and ethnic diversity
    - Segregation

- Built environments and social supports
    - Social and educational organizational infrastructure
    - Access to public transportation

# Critical Choke Points

- K-12 Completion

- Transition to College

- College Persistence and Completion

- Post-College Trajectories

# American-born Children of Undocumented Parents

- K-12 Completion
  - Parents fear of interacting with institutions
  - Burdens of work life
  - Threat of deportation

- Transition to College
  - Financial aid hurdles

- College Persistence and Completion
  - Family resources

# DACA Beneficiaries

- Transition to College
  - Exclusion from federal financial aid
  - Exclusion from higher education institutions in one's state
  - In-state tuition
  - State Aid

- College Persistence and Completion
  - Financial resources
  - Supports on campus

- Post-College Trajectories
  - Occupational Licenses

# Undocumented Young People

- Transition to College
  - In-state tuition and scholarships only open to DACA beneficiaries

- College Persistence and Completion
  - Exclusion from driver's licenses and other forms of access
  - On-campus resources only available to DACA beneficiaries

- Post-College Trajectories
  - Exclusion from labor force
  - Graduate programs difficult to navigate

# Deportees

- K-12 Completion
  - Language and school curriculum issues
  - Social isolation
- Post-College Trajectories
  - Recognition of degrees
  - Navigating foreign job market

# Unaccompanied Minors and Refugee Youth

- K-12 Completion
    - Language and school curriculum issues
    - Navigating multiple institutions
    - Family instability

- Transition to College
    - Financial aid hurdles

- College Persistence and Completion
    - Family resources

# Where Do We Go from Here?

Awareness and sensitivity training for staff, faculty, and community members

Identification of allies

Resource centers and/or staff liaison

Establish and encourage student support groups

Create visible networks of faculty, counselors, staff, and community partners

Rapid response plans

# Table Questions

- How does what you have heard from Prof. Gonzales relate to your local context?

- What strategies is your community using to address these issues?

- Each city/table will be asked to share one issue or question.

# Thank You

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