

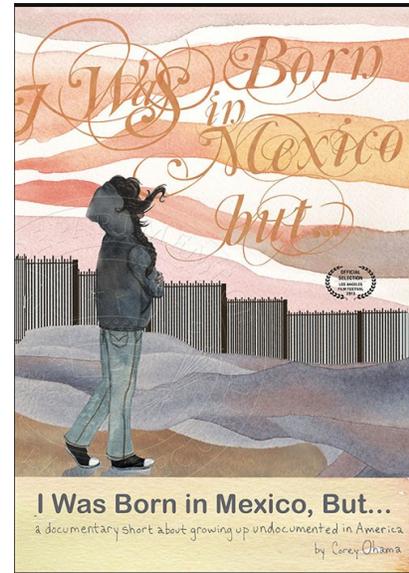
I Was Born in Mexico, But...

Genre: Documentary
 Length: 12 minutes
 Release: 2013
 Director: Corey Ohama
 Official Website: www.dreamerdocs.com

Film Background

I Was Born in Mexico, But... tells the personal story of an undocumented young woman who was brought to the U.S. as a child. For fear of deportation, she did not want to appear on camera.

The interview was done before DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) was implemented.



Questions for Discussion

1. How did you feel after watching the documentary? Was there anything you found hopeful or inspiring?
2. What are some of the challenges that the subject faces?
3. Why do you think the subject says, “I am born here. I was born in Mexico but I was born here”? Do you think the subject is American? Why or why not?
4. Discuss the use of educational films, newsreels and advertisements in the film. What purpose did those elements of the documentary serve?
5. The subject discusses the DREAM Act. Talk about arguments made for and against providing a path to citizenship or lawful permanent residency to undocumented young people.
6. The interview in the film was done before DACA was implemented. The young woman has since become a DACA recipient. Study the provisions of DACA and discuss what you think it might have changed for her.
7. In September of 2017, the Trump administration rescinded the DACA program. Through the years there have been many political challenges for undocumented young people. Discuss the strategies the subject uses to cope with her circumstances. What would you do if you were in her place?

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Immigration Reform glossary

DREAM Act: The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act was proposed legislation to provide a path to legal status for undocumented immigrant youth brought to the U.S. as children. 1st proposed in 2001, it was reintroduced in 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011 & 2017. It failed to pass. A 2019 version passed the House but was ignored by the Senate.

DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals): On 6/15/12, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said it would refrain from deporting certain undocumented young people who came to the U.S. as children. Through an application process, DACA grants temporary permission (“deferred action”) to stay in the U.S., employment authorization and a social security number. DACA is not a law: a grant of DACA is temporary (renewable every 2 years) and does not provide a path to legal status. The DACA program was rescinded by the Trump Administration on 9/5/17. After court challenges, the Supreme Court decided in 2020 that the termination of DACA was done in an arbitrary and capricious way that violated Federal law. Renewals continue – to be determined if administration will accept new applications.

DREAMers: the young people who could benefit from the DREAM Act, and who qualified or potentially qualified for DACA. There are an estimated 1.3-1.8 million DREAMers in the U.S.

Additional Information

Higher education: There is currently no federal financial aid for undocumented students, even those who have DACA. 21 states now have laws or provisions permitting in-state tuition at public colleges for certain undocumented students. Some states and universities have financial aid for undocumented students.

Driver’s licenses: 16 states plus DC and Puerto Rico now have laws allowing undocumented immigrants to get driver’s licenses. Young people who have employment authorization and a social security number through DACA can get a license in all 50 states.

Sources

National Immigration Law Center: nilc.org

American Immigration Council: americanimmigrationcouncil.org

Additional Resource

Define American Immigration Fact Sheets: defineamerican.com/factsmatter/