

Advocates Seek to Delay Deportations for Millions

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Eleven people living in the United States illegally, including a high-profile activist, plan to apply for deportation deferrals on Wednesday as part of an effort to pressure [President Obama](#) to include many millions of immigrants in any executive action to reduce deportations.

The coordinated effort was organized by Jose Antonio Vargas, a Filipino who is a well-known leader of the immigrant rights movement, after he was [briefly detained](#) in South Texas in July.

Mr. Vargas and other advocates want the White House to halt deportations for most of the estimated 11 million immigrants here illegally by vastly expanding a 2012 program of deferrals for young people who came when they were children.

“We are asking the administration, How inclusive are you going to be?” Mr. Vargas said. “Should any of these cases be left behind? I think they should not.”

Mr. Vargas will ask Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson to grant him a four-year deferral, while the other immigrants, selected to represent a range of foreigners without legal status, will each do the same. They include a German businesswoman in Los Angeles who has been living in the United States since 1986, a 34-year-old South Korean man in Brooklyn who came when he was a toddler, and a Mexican woman in rural Alabama who is caring for three young grandchildren after their parents were deported.

With the applications will be a legal memorandum arguing that the president has “broad legal authority to provide temporary status” to those immigrants and by extension to millions of others like them.

After Republican leaders in the House of Representatives said they would not take up an immigration overhaul this year, Mr. Obama said last month that he would use executive authority to expand deportation protections and make other fixes to the ailing immigration system. While White House officials and Mr. Johnson have been working to stem a surge of illegal border crossings in Texas, they have also been considering what changes the president can make on his own and how many illegal immigrants to include.

Since legislation failed on Capitol Hill, immigrant advocacy groups have turned their focus to the president, demanding that he halt most deportations. While officials say they are looking at a broad menu of options, some legal advisers doubt that the president has the authority to grant sweeping protections and work permits to all immigrants here illegally.

Although Mr. Vargas, now 33, has been living in the United States illegally since he was 12, he had never been detained by the immigration authorities until he traveled to the Texas border in July and could not leave the region without passing a Border Patrol checkpoint. Agents held him for eight hours, then released him with an immigration warrant. Mr. Vargas was too old by several months to qualify for the 2012 youth program.

Another immigrant who is seeking a deferral, Michaela Graham, 52, said she first came here from Germany when she was 12. "I fell in love; this was my country," she said.

Ms. Graham moved here in 1986 with legal work visas. Some years later her marriage to an American citizen collapsed suddenly, she said, leaving her with no resident green card.

With comprehensive immigration reform on hold in Congress, Nancy Paredo's family is waiting on a promise from President Obama to take executive action. Here's a look at some steps he might take.

"I don't fit into any of the visa categories," said Ms. Graham, who has no other family here. But over the years she has founded businesses in several states, most recently a club in Los Angeles to promote the culinary efforts of aspiring restaurateurs.

"Because I'm German and I am blond and blue-eyed, people don't target me," Ms. Graham said.

Another applicant, Maria del Rosario Duarte, 54, a Mexican living in Albertville, Ala., said she cared for three grandchildren, all three here legally, including one boy, now 6, who was born with severe medical conditions. He breathes and eats through tubes and walks with braces.

"I am scared to take them back to Mexico," said Ms. Duarte, who said the doctors familiar with her grandson's ailments were nearby. She is hoping to obtain papers so she can work legally, which would also help her in an effort to adopt the children.

In Brooklyn, Jong Min You, 34, said he was disappointed and "even a little angry" when he learned that he was too old for Mr. Obama's 2012 deferred action program, even though he had been brought by his South Korean parents when he was 1. Although he graduated from college in 2003, without immigration papers he has not been able to pursue his plans to attend law school and become a federal judge, and he has been working in his family's grocery store.

"I'm hoping the president will think of people like me and grant deferred action to the rest of the 11 million," he said.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/20/us/advocates-seek-to-delay-deportations-for-millions.html>