

Miami high school valedictorian gets deportation reprieve

By [Douglas Stanglin](#), USA TODAY

A high school [valedictorian in Miami who had been threatened with imminent deportation has won at least a two-year reprieve](#), *The Miami Herald* reports.

Daniela Pelaez, of North Miami Senior High School, was [ordered by a federal immigration judge last week to leave the country](#) by the end of March.

Pelaez, 18, came to the United States from Colombia with her parents at the age of 4, but remained when they overstayed their tourist visa.

Her brother serves in the U.S. Army and has become a U.S. citizen, *The Herald* notes. Her mother is unable to return to the States after going back to Colombia for cancer treatment in 2006. Her father got residency papers through her brother.

Pelaez's case provoked an outpouring of support from more than 2,600 students, teachers and community leaders who turned out in North Miami last Friday to protest the deportation order.

Her attorney, Nera Shefer, tells *The Herald* that Pelaez and her sister have been given a deferred action for two years on their case, meaning immigration authorities will not carry out any deportation order during that time.

"It's a huge relief that I get to stay for graduation," the teen [tells WSVN-TV](#).

The newspaper quotes a spokesman for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement as citing "prosecutorial discretion" for the decision.

The spokesman says the agency operates on a case-by-case basis and is focusing its resources on higher priority cases, such as criminals who have recently crossed into the country or have egregiously violated immigration law.

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