

What Immigration Reform Could Do for Deported Immigrants

How Immigration Reform Could Provide a Way Back to the U.S. for Deportees

By TED HESSON

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An immigration bill passed last week by the Senate would create a pathway to citizenship for the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in the country.

But there's another group that could be affected: the deported and those who were once undocumented but chose to leave.

The Senate bill would allow previously deported spouses, children and parents of permanent residents and citizens to apply for a provisional immigration status. The same would go for some young immigrants, aka DREAMers, who lived in the U.S. but have since been removed or voluntarily left the country.

Why did people leave? In some of those cases, years without the chance to work legally, see family or even drive a car was a motivation to "self-deport." So an immigration reform bill represents a new opportunity, but it also makes for a tough decision about whether or not to return to the U.S.

CNNMéxico told some of these stories in a [Spanish-language piece](#) published on Tuesday. The article focused on DREAMers who voluntarily left the U.S. or were deported, and what they were doing now.

Maru, identified by first-name only in the piece, moved to New York at age 9 but is currently living in Mexico City, according to CNNMéxico. She now works as a sales analyst and dreams of pursuing a postgraduate degree in the same field.

"I think that I went back [to Mexico] because I knew that my parents left in order to give us a better education," Maru told CNNMéxico. "And while I was [in the U.S.], I felt that all this effort went into the trash if I worked in a flower shop, in child care or as a butcher."

Another young person CNNMéxico interviewed, Samantha Hernández, sounded pessimistic. She returned to Tijuana voluntarily from the U.S.

"On the surface, everything seems really nice, but really you don't belong there and you're never going to be American, even if you get your papers," she said.

Although some people now living in their home countries may feel conflicted about returning, immigrant rights groups like United We Dream are fighting to give them the option, since there are many families hoping to be reunited.

The bill that passed in the Senate doesn't offer a way for undocumented immigrants to bring family members who have been removed back to the U.S. The only people who might have the option to return would be qualifying DREAMers or the spouses, children or parents of permanent residents or citizens.

During a meeting last month between immigrant children and their deported parents at the border fence in Nogales, Arizona, parents spoke about the inability to reunite with their children. The action was set up by United We Dream.

One mother [told The New York Times](#) she was "glad and sad at the same time" when she met her son at the border. "Glad to be here next to him, sad because the fence is between us," she said.

There's no firm estimate on how many people would be permitted to return under the Senate bill. But since Mexicans make up an [estimated 59 percent](#) of the undocumented population in the country, you can use data on Mexican migration to get an idea.

From 2005 to 2010, [1.4 million Mexicans](#) left the U.S. and returned to Mexico, according to the Pew Hispanic Center. While most of those left voluntarily, Pew estimates that between 5 and 35 percent of those people returning to Mexico were forced to leave.

Judging by those numbers, we're probably not talking about millions of people who would be affected by such a provision. It's also worth mentioning that it's not likely everyone would be approved: each application would be decided on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

http://abcnews.go.com/ABC_Univision/Politics/immigration-reform-deported-dreamers/story?id=19556936