



A Discussion about DACA and Immigration; Cohen and Wolf's Lunch and Learn Series Continued

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Following the June 18, 2020 U.S. Supreme Court decision to reject the Federal Government's attempt to eliminate the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program, Cohen and Wolf's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee continued its Lunch & Learn Series by hosting a Lunch & Learn on July 27, 2020 centered around Immigration in America.

We were joined by our featured speakers Attorney Denia Perez and Joella Roberts, both of whom are DACA recipients and active advocates for DACA's continuation. Attorney Perez recently completed a two-year Immigrant Justice Corps Justice Fellowship at Make the Road New York, and is currently working in the New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs as a policy advisor. Joella Roberts is a University Program Coordinator at the bipartisan organization FWD.us where she strives to reform the current immigration and criminal justice systems. Prior to working for FWD.us, Joella founded Migration Matters, the first organization at an HBCU which focused on education, advocacy, and building awareness on behalf of all migrant communities.

Denia and Joella's presentation provided attendees with a brief overview of the three 'legal' pathways to enter the United States and the immense barriers that exist in the current system which limit immigrants from legally entering the country. Denia and Joella explained the DACA program and also discussed their individual journeys through the U.S. immigration system. Additionally, Denia and Joella stressed the importance of recognizing the intersection of the Black Lives Matter movement with particular migrant communities, stressing the supplementary discrimination that is frequently faced by individuals that identify with both communities.

To end the conversation, Denia and Joella provided attendees with action items to consider participating in following the discussion. For those interested, some of the action items provided include:

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- Supporting HR6: Pathway to Citizenship for TPS and DACA recipients;
- Advocating and supporting legislation to make your city a sanctuary city;
- Supporting legislation that makes the healthcare system more inclusive to migrant communities;
and
- Funding higher education scholarship programs for immigrant students.

Cohen and Wolf is extremely grateful to Denia Perez and Joella Roberts for their willingness to be a part of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee's Lunch & Learn series. **Denia Perez Joella Roberts**