

# Sharing the Dream

Addressing the Needs of  
Undocumented Immigrant  
Students

Roberto G. Gonzales, Ph.D.  
Harvard University  
Roberto\_Gonzales@Gse.Harvard.Edu  
Twitter: @RGGonzales1



# Time

- Central element in studies of immigrant incorporation and adaptation
- Policy change is slow and incremental
  - DREAM Act first introduced in 2001

# Congressional Inactivity



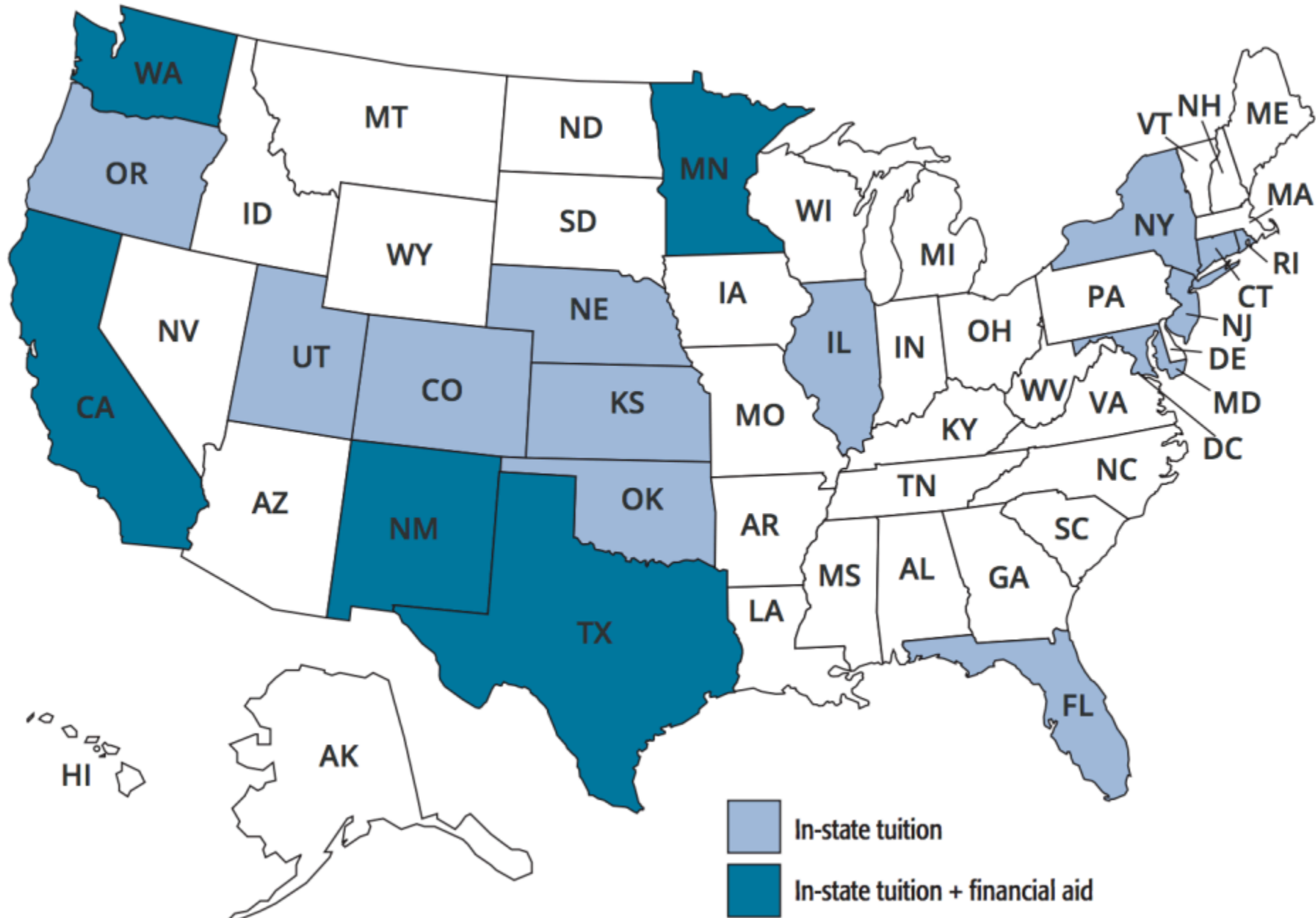
# DREAM Act



# Framing Deservingness



# State policies for undocumented individuals



# Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

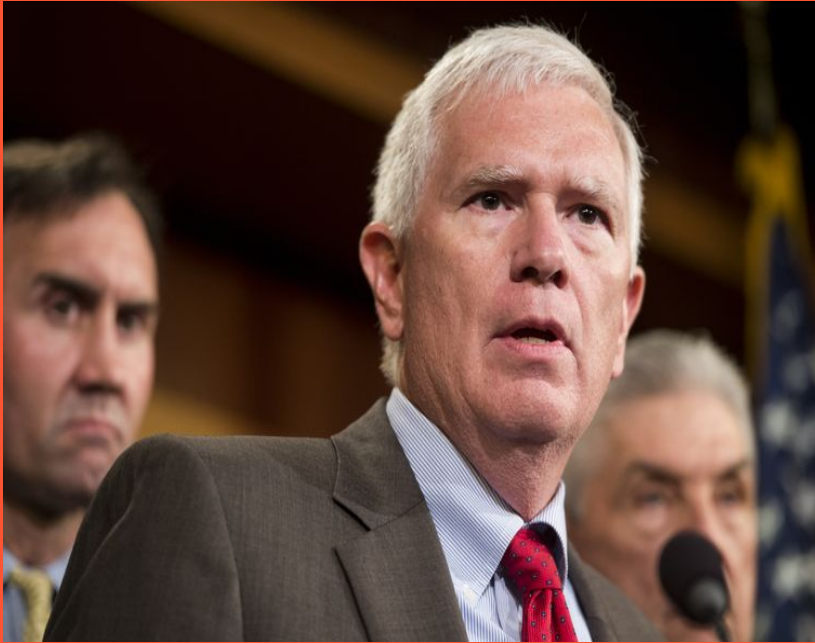




**Policy Frames  
Obscure Everyday  
Realities**



# Everyday Life Goes On





# Between Belonging & Illegality



# The *Plyler* Dilemma

# Lack of Continuity

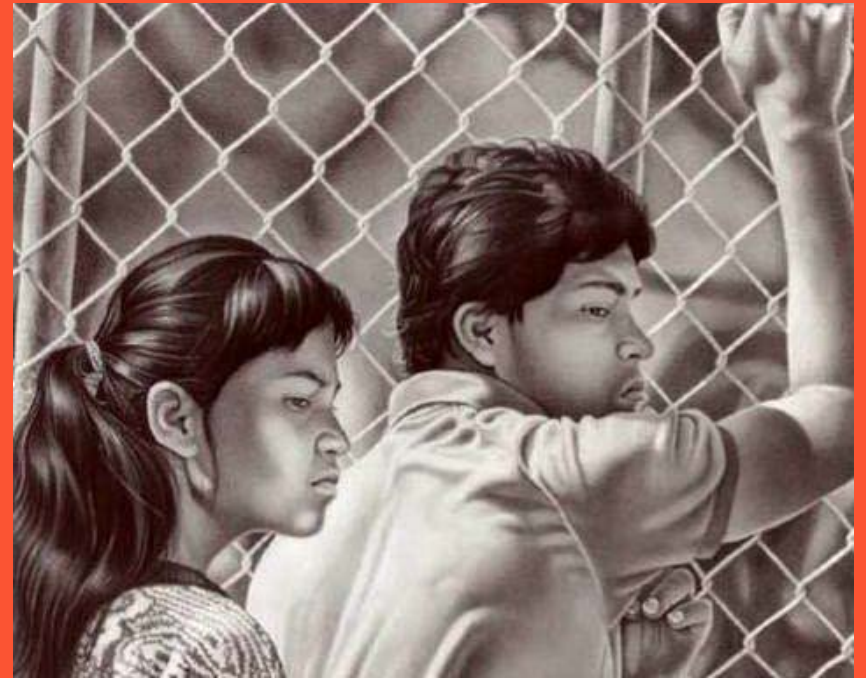
## K-12 Experiences



## Late Adolescence



# Awakening to a Nightmare



# Isolation





# Mental Health Challenges





# The Transition to “Illegality”

**Protected  
Status**

K-12 education is free  
and legal

Most institutions in  
childhood do not  
require legal status

**Transition to  
Adulthood**

Late adolescence  
triggers legal  
limitations:

- Working
- Driving
- Financial Aid
- Socializing

**Awake to a  
Nightmare**

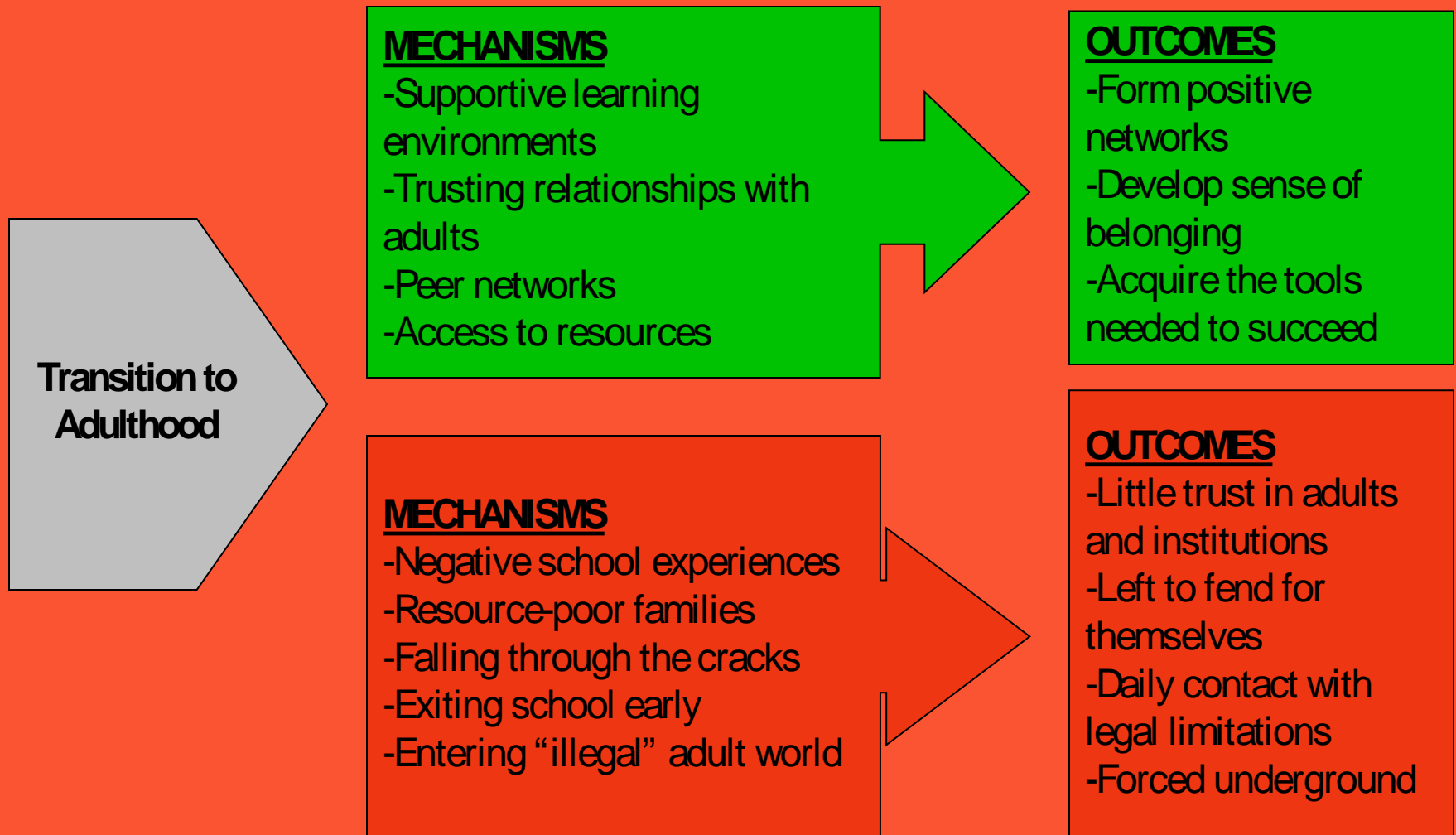
Succession of blocked  
opportunities

Fear, stigma, changed  
social patterns

Forced decisions—reveal  
or conceal

Physical/ emotional  
manifestations

# Diverging Trajectories





# Navigating Higher Education

# Completing the Transition



## DACA's Mixed Results



# Postsecondary Barriers



- DACA does not address exclusion from federal financial aid and most state aid
- Many undocumented students make multiple stop-outs

# Human Capital Needs



# Implications for Policy

## Legalization and Access

- Professional Licenses
- In-State Tuition & Financial Aid
- Expand DACA & DAPA
- The Development Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act
- Pathway to legalization for all undocumented immigrants



# Staff Education-Training-Support

- Training programs on campus (K-12 & College) for staff and faculty
  - Awareness and sensitivity training
  - Acceptance should = prepared to support all undocumented students
- Identification of allies
- Resource centers and/or staff liaison
- Establish and encourage student support groups
- Centralize Information
- Create visible network of faculty, counselors, staff, and community partners

# Mentorship

- Engage parents in the process
- Connect students with professionals to increase their awareness of opportunities and options
- Outreach programs: graduate school, higher education, K-12
- Peer to peer mentoring
- Network and directory of students and their career interests

# Professional Development

- Raise awareness and create opportunities for life after high school and college
- Develop partnerships with employers and non-profit orgs to provide internship and work opportunities for students while in school
- On-campus work opportunities not tied to federal work study
- Develop opportunities for students interested in health careers/helping professions

# Improve the Pipeline

- Need to create a viable pipeline
- Scholarship programs and increased aid
- Establish and make available research programs open to undocumented undergrads
- Improve campus climate to encourage students to persist and graduate
- Build better bridges from college to graduate programs on campus

# Health/Mental Health Services

- Increase awareness on campus and in the community
- Develop guides that are informative and accessible
- Train counselors and student services staff
- Commit resources to hire mental health professionals who are sensitive to the unique circumstances and needs of undocumented students



**Thank You!**

Roberto\_Gonzales@Gse.Harvard.Edu

Twitter: @RGGonzales1