

Hello House Representatives,

My name is Maria and I live in Ypsilanti Township. I am representing the Washtenaw Immigrant Justice Coalition, a new coalition of immigrant rights organizations working to make our county a safe and welcoming place for all our residents and building deep relationships so that people are not divided by race, gender, or experience with mass incarceration.

I have lived in the U.S for 18 years, since I was 9 years old. I have lived most of my life in the shadows as an undocumented immigrant. I lived in fear of the police, of immigration enforcement, of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. And even now that I have temporary status with DACA, these fears are still there – under the surface.

However, I have also been fighting against anti-immigrant policies and false rhetoric that criminalize myself and my community. I have two messages for you today.

First, I want to put a face to this issue, because odds are that you probably don't know anyone who is undocumented. I have lived in the U.S. for most of my life, this is my home. I work as a social worker in the Ypsilanti/Ann Arbor area; I graduated with a Masters of Social Work from the University of Michigan in December. I pay my taxes every year, and plan to live in Michigan for a long time. As a matter of fact, I've even started thinking about buying a house in Ypsilanti.

Secondly, I want to address how these 2 bills harm our state for 5 reasons:

- 1. Forcing police departments to ask the immigration status of anyone they think is undocumented leads to racial profiling. Let's be honest, no one is going to immigration status of a blonde, blue-eyed person who is pulled over. They are going to be soliciting the status of people who look like me.
- 2. These bills will break the trust between police departments and communities. People will not report crime when they are afraid that it might lead them to getting deported.
- 3. These bills ignore the huge financial contributions immigrants bring to our country; according to a report by the New American Economy in 2014 undocumented immigrants contributed 82.9 million to the state of Michigan through state and local taxes.
- 4. If you're thinking that undocumented immigrants are a drain on the welfare system, this is a non-issue. Undocumented immigrants cannot receive Medicare, social security, unemployment, enroll or buy into the ACA, or any kind of social service benefit that requires a social security number.
- 5. These bills actively seek to harm community relationships and trust and turn neighbor against neighbor. We need strong, safe communities where people care about each other and take care of each other. You, as legislators, should support communities, not pass bills to undermine and disrupt them.

I could go on and on about how these bills hurt our state and our people. Not just those who are undocumented. When people are afraid to go to the grocery store, to go to the doctor, to even take their kids to school – it hurts all of us. Let's be a better Michigan.

I love living here, and I want to stay here. But I want to live in a state that has an educated understanding of the issues, and doesn't give into fear tactics. These two bills are not just morally wrong; they are economically dangerous for our state. Please vote no on HB4105 and HB4334.

Thank you.