



# FIRST FOCUS

MAKING CHILDREN & FAMILIES THE PRIORITY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **WALTER LARA INDEPENDENCE DAY VICTORY!** *Homeland Security Defers Deportation of Honor Student for One Year*

### *Victory Opens Next Leg in Fight to Pass the Dream Act*

**Washington, DC**—Today, after 48 hours of intense activism by Congressional Leaders, bloggers, and thousands of grassroots activists who made calls and sent letters on Walter Lara’s behalf, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) moved to defer 23-year old Lara’s scheduled deportation back one year until July 3, 2010. In response to DHS’s deferment, Walter Lara issued the following statement:

“Today, words cannot express my gratitude to Secretary Janet Napolitano, Senator Bill Nelson, Representatives Corrine Brown, Lincoln Diaz-Balart, and the thousands of grassroots activists whose unified efforts have given me a second chance to live out my American Dream.

“As I look to celebrate Independence Day with family and friends this weekend, I have once again seen what makes America the best country in the world. Americans are fair, just, and kind. When we unite our strength to defend our shared values -opening rather than shutting the doors of opportunity - we can achieve anything. As I have said before, America is the only country I have known and I am an American. I have never been more proud to say that than I am today.

“But even as the dust settles on this tremendous personal victory, my sights are clearly set on the struggle ahead to build a long-term future for me and the more than 2 million like me whose lives may be cut short and dreams deferred.

“The action taken by the leaders in Congress and the Department of Homeland Security is an acknowledgment that our immigration laws are broken. The DREAM Act, if passed, would help people like myself, who came here through no fault of their own, stay in this country, be put on a path to citizenship and contribute to our nation.”

[Click Here to read more about Walter Lara](http://www.firstfocus.net/pages/3608) or visit <http://www.firstfocus.net/pages/3608>

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**Background:**

The DREAM Act, introduced into the House and Senate on March 26, would prevent the situation facing Walter Lara today, by providing legal status for young people who were brought to the U.S. years ago as undocumented immigrant children through no fault of their own. For the estimated 2 million high school graduates effected, who continue on to college or military service, the DREAM Act would provide a pathway to legal residency.

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*First Focus is a bipartisan advocacy organization that is committed to making children and their families a priority in federal policy and budget decisions.*

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