How does President Obama's Executive Action Affect Us?

Atlanta, GA, November 14, 2014 — RAYMOND PARTOLAN, Mercer University Senior, DACA recipient, and student activist. Raymond’s parents are eligible for deferred action because his younger brothers are US Citizens.

RAYMOND: I’m ecstatic. President Obama’s announcement last night extends prosecutorial discretion and protection from deportation to my parents—something we’ve been waiting for over a decade now. Watching his speech live brought me to tears because, growing up, I watched my mother and father work their hardest, waking up early in the morning to work and coming back late at night from work, feet, hands, and soul sore from the day’s work.

I’m thankful for President Obama’s courage, against all the opposition, to take a stand on something that he promised early in his first campaign for the presidency. Because of Congress' inaction, he resolved to do something about it, within the confines of the law.

Make no mistake. The fight is not over. Millions were left out of this announcement. Without actual congressional action, nothing is solved. This is merely a bandage on an open wound. My colleagues and I will continue to fight to fix our broken immigration system.

In the meantime, I’ll celebrate with my family. This is a step in the right direction and a well-deserved victory for thousands of activists across the country who have been fighting for this.

KEISH KIM, student at Syracuse University, and DACA recipient. Keish’s parents are not eligible because neither she nor her brother are US Citizens or Lawful Permanent Residents.

KEISH: My initial reactions to President Obama’s announcement last night were anger and betrayal. These political policies and tactics always seem to push the most vulnerable and those who need the most recognition under the bus. And it is through their labor that the rest of us benefit. It is folks like my parents who need this temporary relief the most; they are the most vulnerable not me. They are the ones always moving around without licenses trying to make a living. They are the ones who will get stopped, cannot speak the English language and be able to stand up for themselves. They are the ones who have been surviving, sacrificing, keeping me alive, so that I can prosper.

Before celebrating too much of this “victory” we must think about the millions who are left out of this temporary status, millions who have already been deported and question how these legal qualifications serve to separate and differentiate between families who deserve to be together and those who do not. We must not fall into this separation tactic and turn our backs away from each other.

To say that this announcement is the result of years of organizing is disheartening. We need to recognize that this is a collective trauma and collective struggle. We must build alliances across race, class and nationalities. But for now, I am going to be angry and I am going to cry, because that is okay. And the fight continues.

HELEN HO, AAAJ-Atlanta’s Executive Director. Helen and her family immigrated to America in 1975 on a sibling visa. This visa preference would have been eliminated under the bipartisan House immigration bill.
I have mixed feelings about President Obama's Executive Action. I applaud the President for using his legal
authority to enable more people to live without fear of deportation and keep families intact. But I’m growing
tired of having to accept (and be grateful for) less than what is needed. I’m frustrated at how late these fixes are
offered, especially knowing that the delays are due to hyper-partisanship and an attempt to manipulate
election results which doesn’t benefit any American I know. I’m sick of the inclusion, in this and every other
immigration policy, of more taxpayer dollars into the US/Mexico border. Our worsening economy is the principle
reason why border crossings have gone down. Think how much better our economy would be if more of our tax
dollars went to things that could really make a difference like better schools, healthcare, and increased access to
services. Raymond and Keish both spoke about the fact that the fight for immigrant rights is not over. The
President’s action should spur all people of good conscience to push for a complete fix to our federal immigration
laws with renewed vigor.

Get off the sidelines. Be courageous. Prepare to take action with us.

To read the details of President Obama’s Immigration Accountability Executive Action, CLICK HERE.

**About Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta**

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta (formerly Asian American Legal Advocacy Center or AALAC) is the
first non-profit law center dedicated to Asian immigrants and refugees (“Asian Americans”) in the Southeast.

Our goal is to engage, educate and empower under-represented Asian Americans to greater civic participation.

We are one of five independent organizations that make up the national Asian Americans Advancing Justice.
Together with our affiliates in Chicago, DC, Los Angeles and San Francisco, we bring more than 100 years of
collective experience in addressing the civil rights issues faced by Asian Americans and other vulnerable and