

Study Guide: Deferred Action

Summary Context: (Themes)

Deferred Action tells the story of Javier Mejia, an undocumented immigrant in his early twenties. When he was just a baby, he was brought to the United States from El Salvador by his mother, who did not survive the journey. Since then, he has been in the care of his grandmother, who was determined to raise Javi as “a good American.” By all accounts, she seems to have succeeded – Javi is a straight-A student, a caring grandson, a loving boyfriend, and an active member of the North Texas Dream Team, an organization fighting for the rights of undocumented students. However, after a viral video takes him from relative anonymity to political superstardom, Javi’s every move becomes subject to public scrutiny. Javi is forced to choose what he stands for and who he stands with, and his choices surprise and alienate the people closest to him. How far will Javi go to fight for what he believes in? In this world premiere play, developed through a groundbreaking collaboration between the Dallas Theater Center and Cara Mia Theater Co., *Deferred Action* takes audiences straight to the heart of what director and co-writer David Lozano calls “the civil rights issue of our time:” immigration reform.

Key Vocabulary Terms:

- “*Nosotros soñamos con nuestros ancestros*”
- DACA-
- DAPA-
- Gentrification-
- Mantra-

Pre- Performance Questions:

- In the mix of challenges facing the USA today- including health care, terrorism, the economy, climate change, Russian hacking in the US election, tax code reform, election finance reform- where does comprehensive immigration reform stand as a priority measure to be faced by the federal government? By local Government?

- The Dallas City Council, the Dallas County Commissioner’s Court, and the Dallas Independent School District have overwhelmingly voted to legally challenge the State of Texas’ SB4 law,(the “Show Me Your Papers” law) that forbids and punishes local governments’ refusal to cooperate with any and all attempts by immigration enforcement (ICE) to question someone’s citizenship status. What do these local government actions say to you and what you and fellow citizens ought to be doing?

Post-Performance Questions:

- What do you draw from your own personal life journey that resembles or connects with that of Javier’s? Of Nancy’s? Of Lisa? Of Robby? Of Dale or Ximena? What tough moral choices have you made that may be a dilemma or a conflict between your personal goals and your core values?
- The story unfolding in *Deferred Action* was when there existed a congress was controlled by the Democrats with a Democratic President in office. Today, there is a Republican elected congress and a Republican president. What, if any different tactics or approaches need to be utilized or called for today? What, if any new alliances or collaborations with the struggle for immigration reform are called for today?

Forming Action Steps and for Online Resources:

The Texas American Civil Liberties Union provides comprehensive legal guides designed to inform you of “Your rights under SB4”: visit www.aclutx.org

To learn what actions are taking place, or to get involved- contact the **North Texas Dream Team** (NTDT), an immigrant youth-led, nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance the dreams and goals of students, go to: www.northtexasdreamteam.org

Other Involvements: United We Dream is the largest immigrant youth-led organization in the nation: a powerful nonpartisan network is made up of over 100,000 immigrant youth and allies and 55 affiliate organizations in 26 states. United We Dream organizes and advocates for the dignity and fair treatment of immigrant youth and families, regardless of immigration status: www.unitedwedream.org

To receive free legal services for immigration issues or human rights abuse contact the Human Rights Initiative at: www.hrionline.org or call them at 214.855.0520

For English and Spanish Citizenship classes contact Catholic Charities of Dallas at <http://www.ccdallas.org/> or call 469.801.8188.