

Testimony of Alan Aleman

Before the U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Education and the Workforce

Full Committee Hearing on *“Reviving Our Economy: How Career and Technical Education
Can Strengthen the Workforce”*

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Chairman Kline, Mr. Scott, and members of the Committee; thank you for inviting me here today to tell my story. My name is Alan Aleman, and my American Dream began when I came to this country at the age of 11; many opportunities came into my life. I can say, in my own opinion, that I attended one of the best high schools in Southern Nevada. I attended Southeast Career Technical Academy, or SECTA high school, formerly known as Vo-Tech High school.

My parents came to this country looking for a better future and education, and that was what SECTA high school gave me. SECTA high school not only gave me education but also gave me the necessary tools to succeed in life and in my career. I applied to SECTA high school because one of my dreams is to become a doctor. SECTA had a medical program that I knew would be great for my career. When I received my acceptance to SECTA high school in June 2006, I was very enthusiastic. I felt like I was finally reaching my goals.

My freshman year was amazing! I felt welcomed and appreciated; I came across teachers that cared about me and my future like; Mrs. Arroyo and my English teacher; Mrs. Harris. She would always be there for me for any questions, and she would never criticize me for being undocumented, instead she pushed me to pursue my dreams.

Unfortunately in my sophomore year I got the sad news that I was not going to be able enroll into the medical program at SECTA due the lack of 9 digits; a social security number. Due to this setback, I decided to change the business program instead; which was Office Technology and I do not regret it whatsoever. As part of the Office technology program I became a member Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA). One of my favorite projects as a FBLA member was the *American Enterprise Day*. I still remember making cards in both languages; English and Spanish and placing them on the cafeteria tables with the meaning of what the American Enterprise was.

While I was in the business major, there were many internships available to students that involved my career and technical skills. I knew I was capable, but many of the internships required a social security number, and without authorization to work, I could not participate. It was sad to see that many of my US citizen friends were taking advantage of these opportunities and I was not able to. I was; however, able to obtain certifications that I knew were going to help me in an office job; Microsoft Office Application Specialist in

Word, Excel, and PowerPoint 2007. These are certifications that many office employers would seek in a potential employee.

I was excited that I graduated from high school but skeptical. I knew I had the necessary skills to obtain a good job where I could utilize my certifications, but because of my immigration status, I could not be employed in a job like that. Despite that, I was determined to pursue college. Luckily, in this state of Nevada, I can go to college without a social security number. I have to go part time due to working full time because I am not eligible for financial aid thanks to my immigration status. After I graduate from CSN, I hope to go on and become a doctor or someday be in the Air Force and serve my Country.

In 2011 I became an Executive Board member of the Latino Youth Leadership Alumni (LYLA) to represent them at the Latin Chamber of Commerce as a board member. At the beginning I was nervous because I knew it was a professional environment, but I knew I was ready thanks to what I learned at SECTA. In 2012 thanks to the endorsement of Maggie Petrel, a board member of the Latin chamber of commerce, I was voted on to be the youth board member at the Southern Nevada American Red Cross. I still serve on all three boards, and I know I have been successful in these professional settings thanks to the skills I learned at SECTA High School.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) announcement of June 15, 2012 changed my life. I was partially given the opportunity to live without fear, get a decent job and finally to obtain something that I saw my friends getting in high school, a drivers license. On October 17, 2012 I was approved for DACA, I felt like a weight was lifted off my shoulders. Hermandad Mexicana Transnacional offered me a job, in which I was finally applying the skills I learned at SECTA in a real job. Prior to DACA, I was not working in a job like this.

DACA is temporary and not sufficient, I still do not know if I am going to be able to enroll in medical school and DACA does not give me a path to citizenship. We need a common sense approach to fix these problems. DREAMers and families are tired of seeing and listening to unsupportive excuses just to avoid this topic. Many US citizen students can not concentrate at school because they are thinking about "what -if my parents do not come pick me up because they got removed from this country."

It is sad to see that many in the House of Representatives say they support DREAMers but yet, they vote against us and that puts DACA at risk over and over again. I loved being a student at SECTA, but what good is it to learn the skills and then have no options to go forward with my dreams. I think Congress should support schools like SECTA and other schools through the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

It's heart breaking that many families are being separated by this administration and because some members care more about their political affiliation than what the American People want: A path to citizenship. Members of this committee I would like to ask you to take action on this matter, instead of perpetuating it. Many dreams, futures, and families

depend on you. Don't do it for your political affiliation, but do it for the greater good of this country; The United States of America.

Again, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on my experience with career and technical education here in CCSD, and more importantly on the need for Congressional action on the DREAM Act and comprehensive immigration reform.