

26-06-17

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<http://www.chicagotribune.com/hoy/ct-hoy-16-year-old-boy-awaits-an-immigration-judge-s-order-on-his-father-s-future-20170626-story.html>

**16- Year old boy awaits an immigration judge´s order on his father´s future**

n a few days, John Gutiérrez will accompany his father to the Immigration offices in Chicago for a check-in. The 16-year-old has endured the fear of his parents’ possible deportation for his entire life. As his father’s meeting date approaches, Gutiérrez’s dread has grown.

“Our family might be separated,” he said. “Just, it’s always on my mind.”

Gutiérrez and two of his siblings were born in the U.S. and are citizens. But his parents and his older brother are Mexican citizens. After the birth of their first son, who still lives with family in Mexico, Gutiérrez’s parents decided to move to the U.S. in search of better opportunities for their family. They have lived in the country since 1997, raising a family in Chicago.

For years, the Gutiérrez family maintained a low profile to avoid attention from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). That changed in 2006, when Gutiérrez’s father received a notice summoning him for a meeting with Immigration officials.

Gutiérrez doesn’t know what might happen when his dad meets with ICE officials, on July 11. But he’s preparing for the worst.

“We have more fear that my father may be deported, with what’s going on right now and with Trump,” he said. “Before, we weren’t really that worried, but, now, with all that’s been going on, we’re worried.”

Gutiérrez is one of approximately 5.9 million minors under the age of 18 living with an undocumented family member, according to census data from 2010-2014. During the height of deportations under the Obama administration, between 2011 and 2013, half a million U.S. citizen minors experienced the detention and deportation of at least one parent, according to ICE statistics.

Steve Cortés, a member of Trump’s Hispanic Council, said that the administration plans to implement comprehensive immigration reform that could possibly prevent the separation of families. However, such reforms most likely wouldn’t be enacted until 2018 at the earliest, he said. Cortés acknowledged that kids like Gutiérrez don’t have time to wait on the political process in Washington.

“It won’t be soon, unfortunately,” Cortés said. “I wish it were.”

Gutiérrez is about to finish his second year at Benito Juarez Community Academy in the Pilsen neighborhood, on the Lower West Side, and hopes to graduate from high school and attend college. But if his father is deported, realizing such a dream would be improbable, he said. Without his father’s support, Gutiérrez will have to work and help his mom take care of his younger siblings.

“I would like to go to college and, yeah, help my family out, give an example to my siblings for finishing school and being successful, which is something that might not happen,” he said. “If my dad is deported, it will be difficult for me to accomplish that.”

Gutiérrez said his parents immigrated to the U.S. to give their kids a better life. He doesn’t understand why politicians want to deport immigrants like his dad.

“We’re all the same. We’re all just trying to make our lives better, like everyone else,” he said. “We’re not criminals. We’re not here to harm anyone. We’re just trying to be happy, and no one should really be separated from their family – growing up without a father or mother. It’s just not right.”

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