Though he once planned to be a prosecutor, he's now contributing to congressional blogs and planning to open a Dreamers' Chamber of Commerce.

"We're creating businesses in media, web design and political campaigning," he said. "It wasn't by choice, but we're challenging the anti-immigration rhetoric that all illegal immigrants steal Americans' jobs. We're creating jobs and we're hiring U.S. citizens."

Organizations and industry leaders have stepped up to help graduates without legal status start careers. The Dream Resource Center at UCLA places such graduates at jobs throughout the country via its national internship program called Dream Summer.

San Francisco-based Educators for Fair Consideration, or E4FC, connects graduates with lawyers and Silicon Valley leaders. Mentors such as Laurene Powell Jobs, widow of Apple Inc. co-founder Steve Jobs, and Palm Pilot inventor Jeff Hawkins provide financial support, life and legal advice and networking clout.

One option they're exploring is getting companies to sponsor graduates for H-1B visas, temporary employment visas for specialty occupations. It has been done in a few cases. But it's risky; the young person has to leave the country and could be barred from returning for ten years.

"We're really looking hard for solutions," Hawkins said. "What else can these kids do? They are desperate. They want to work, they want to practice what they learned in college. What do you tell them? Become an undocumented housekeeper? They have advanced degrees."

But critics say those degrees should not mean preferential treatment to legalization.

"They're illegal immigrants, so being a college graduate doesn't make any difference," said Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, a Washington group that advocates tighter immigration policies.

Despite such sentiments, many graduates have come out publicly about their status and formed a nationwide network through social media, marches and conferences.

Experts say a growing number, like Isabel Castillo of Harrisonburg, Va., who was 6 when she was smuggled into the U.S. from Mexico, have become politically active. Castillo, who couldn't use her social work degree from Eastern Mennonite University, waited tables and volunteered with education and immigrant rights groups.

Now, she works full-time advocating for passage of the DREAM Act, leading local rallies, squaring off with Virginia politicians and running local political campaigns.

"I never thought I'd be doing this, it's very political," she said. "It wasn't part of my interests in college. Now, people are calling me a future congresswoman."
ides steps a more consequential one: What becomes of the children of these immigrants? Business may think of them as nothing but cheap labor—indeed, that's why many business groups support farm labor programs of temporary “guestworkers.” But the vast majority of these immigrants want what everyone else wants: families.

So the short-term benefits of migration must be balanced against what happens next. The human consequences of immigration come in the form of children born today’s immigrants. Immigrant children and children of immigrants already in the U.S. number 14.1 million—one in five of all Americans aged 18 and under—and that figure is growing fast. A large proportion of this new second generation is growing up under conditions of severe disadvantage. The low wages that make foreign workers so attractive to employers translate into poverty and inferior schooling for their children. If these youngsters were growing up just to replace their parents as the next generation of low-paid manual workers, the present situation could go on forever. But this is not how things happen.

Children of immigrants do not grow up to be low-paid foreign workers but U.S. citizens, with English as their primary language and American-style aspirations. In my study with Rubén G. Ramírez of more than 5,200 second-generation children in the Miami and San Diego school systems, we found that 99 percent spoke fluent English and that by age 17 less than a third maintained any fluency in their parents' tongues. Two-thirds of these youth had aspirations for a college degree and a professional-level occupation. The proportion aspiring to a postgraduate education varied significantly by nationality, but even among the most impoverished groups the figures were high.

The trouble is that poor schools, tough neighborhoods, and the lack of role models to which their parents’ poverty condemns them make these lofty aspirations an unreachable dream for many. Among Mexican parents, the largest group in our survey as well as in the total immigrant population, 2.6 percent had a college education. Even after controlling for their paltry human capital, Mexican immigrants’ incomes are significantly lower than those of workers with comparable education and work experience. Similar conditions were found among other sizable immigrant groups such as Haitians, Laotians, Nicaraguans, and Cambodians. Children born to these immigrants are caught between the pitfalls held by their parents and an American future blocked by a lack of resources and suitable training. Add to this the effects of race discrimination—because the majority of today’s second generation is nonwhite by present U.S. standards—and the stage is set for serious trouble.

The future of children growing up under these conditions is not entirely unknown, for there are several telling precedents. Historical and scholarly writings concerning the nearly five million young inner-city Americans who are not only unemployed but unemployable—and the more than 300,000 young men of color who crowd the American prison system—commonly neglect to mention that this underclass population did not materialize out of thin air but is the human aftermath of earlier waves of labor migration. The forebears of today’s urban underclass were the southern-black and Puerto Rican migrants who moved to the industrializing cit-
performance significantly and reduces the chances of leaving school. Growing up in an intact family and attending a suburban school in early adolescence cuts down the probability of dropping out of high school by a net 11 percent, or approximately half the average dropout rate (again controlling for other variables).

Differences in academic outcomes illustrate ... math-test scores and school-inactivity rates of immigrants' children, again broken down by nationality. While the correlation is not perfect, the groups with the lowest family incomes and educational endowments—and highest probability of attending inner-city schools—also tend to produce the most disadvantaged children, both in terms of test scores and the probability of achieving a high-school diploma.

At San Diego's Hoover High, there's a group that calls itself the Crazy Brown Ladies. They wear heavy makeup, or "ghetto paint," and reserve derision for classmates striving for grades ("schoolgirls" is the Ladies' label for these lesser beings). Petite Guatemalan-born Iris de la Puente never joined the Ladies, but neither did she make it through high school. The daughter of a gardener and a seamstress, she has lived alone with her mother for several years, since her father was deported and did not return. Mrs. de la Puente repeatedly exhorted Iris to stay in school, but her message was empty. The pressure of work kept the mother away from home for many hours, and her own modest education and lack of English fluency did not give her a clue on how to help Iris. By ninth grade, the girl's grade-point average had fallen to a C and she was just hanging in there, hoping for a high-school diploma. When junior year rolled around, it was all over. "Going to college would be nice, but it was clear that it was not for me," Iris said. Getting a job, no matter how poorly paid, became the only option. As far as the immigrant second generation is concerned, it simply is not true that "where there's a will, there's a way." No matter how ambitious parents and children are, no matter how strong their family values and dreams of making it in America, the realities of poverty, discrimination, and poor schools become impassable barriers for many. Like Iris de la Puente, these youths find that the dream of a college education is just that. The same children growing up in inner cities encounter a ready alternative to education in the drug gangs and street culture that already saturate their environment. The emergence of a "rainbow underclass" that includes the offspring of many of today's immigrants is an ominous but distinct possibility.

The short-term economic benefits of immigration are easy to understand and equally easy to appropriate by the urban firms, ranches, and farms that employ this labor, ensuring their profitability. Absent heroic social supports, the long-term consequences are borne by children growing up under conditions of severe disadvantage and by society at large. If the United States wants to keep indulging its addiction to cheap foreign workers, it had better do so with full awareness of what comes next. For immigrants and their children are people, not just labor, and they cannot be dismissed so easily when their work is done. The aftermath of immigration depends on what happens to these children. The prospect for many, given the obstacles at hand, appear dim.

INEQUALITY UNDERMINES DEMOCRACY

Eduardo Porter

Americans have never been too worried about the income gap. The gap between the rich and the rest has been much wider in the United States than in other developed nations for decades. Still, polls show we are much less concerned about it than people in those other nations are.

Policy makers haven't cared much either. The United States does less than other rich countries to transfer income from the affluent to the less fortunate. Even as the income gap has grown enormously over the last 30 years, government has done little to curb the trend.

Our tolerance for a widening income gap may be ebbing, however. Since Occupy Wall Street and kindred movements highlighted the issue, the gaps between the rich and ordinary workers has become a crucial talking point in the Democratic Party's arsenal. In a speech in Osawatomie, Kan., last December, President Obama underscored how "the rungs of the ladder of opportunity had grown farther and farther apart, and the middle class has shrunk."

There are signs that the political strategy has traction. Inequality isn't quite the top priority of voters: only 17 percent of Americans think it is extremely important for the government to try to reduce income and wealth inequality, according to a Gallup survey last November. That is about half the share that said reigniting economic growth was crucial.

But a slightly different question indicates views have changed: 29 percent said it was extremely important for the government to increase equality of opportunity. More significant, 41 percent said that there was not much opportunity in America, up from 17 percent in 1998.

Americans have been less willing to take from the rich and give to the poor in part because of a belief that each of us has a decent shot at prosperity. In 1952, 87 percent of Americans thought there was plenty of opportunity for progress; only 8 percent disagreed. As income inequality has grown, though, many have changed their minds.

From 1993 to 2010, the incomes of the richest 1 percent of Americans grew 58 percent while the rest had a 6.4 percent bump. There is little reason to think

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