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## Locals decry DACA's looming end

By Cathy Dausman



Cynthia Howard at her protest perch above Highway 24 Sept. 7 in Lafayette. Photo Pippa Fisher

With Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, known as DACA, potentially placed on the chopping block, Saint Mary's College president James Donahue, as well as members of a local political organization, and even a lone protestor, are making their displeasure known, despite what may now be its slightly less than uncertain future.

Donahue says SMC is one of hundreds of Catholic colleges and universities opposing the decision to terminate DACA. In a Sept. 6 letter Donahue assured his faculty, staff and students of the college's ongoing commitment to protecting the rights of all students. Donahue, who met with Congressman Mark DeSaulnier earlier this month to discuss possible protection for undocumented students, said the college is also conferring with legal counsel "about the constitutional protections institutions of higher education" have.

Saint Mary's College vows to maintain "a safe and welcoming campus for each and every one of our community members," he said.

Contra Costa (County's) Young Democrats added its voice as well. "DACA has provided an opportunity for nearly one million children across the country to come out of the shadows and participate fully and freely in American society. To see their legal status ripped away is heartbreaking," says CCYD President Jonathan Bash. The DACA program was never presented as a permanent solution, Bash continued, but as a way to protect "deserving residents who have not called any other nation their home.

"Immigrants are America's past, present and future. We cannot let fear and prejudice become the law of the land. CCYD stands with our immigrant brothers and sisters, and will continue fighting on their behalf," Bash said.

Cynthia Howard took her DACA protest to a Lafayette overpass Sept. 7 after the decision, vowing to make Thursday afternoons "This is so not okay" day. Although DACA does not directly affect her, Howard says she was raised "to believe that every person has the right to be respected and that this country is rich and vibrant because of our diversity."

Flags and lettering in hand, Howard says the Lafayette Police Department "has been very accommodating" when she mounts her regular freeway overpass protests above Highway 24.

Pro-DACA response from the traffic below has been "overwhelmingly positive," she says. "Just 10 minutes into the cars honking I am back believing that one person can make a difference."

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