

Undocumented Immigrant Speaks on Punitive Policy

The immigration crisis is a fundamental issue in the U.S., as it brings up the question: Who can have access to the American Dream? According to the Pew Research Center, [46 million](#) immigrants called the United States home in 2022.

A recent [executive order](#) mandates local and state law enforcement to remove anyone who entered unlawfully. A Gallup study showed that [58% of people](#) want decreased immigration to the U.S., while others question whether this aligns with the idea of the U.S. being a nation of immigrants.

Nataly Tabraj, from Peru, and a current junior in high school, offered a glimpse into her life as an undocumented immigrant.

Responses were translated from Spanish.

"When I came here, I entered fifth grade. Also, since I didn't speak English, they looked at me badly or with contempt. The language was difficult, getting along with the students was hard, and everything was different from where I used to live. Now, I'm looking into how I can apply for a [college] scholarship. I'm not sure if I'm eligible.

"I had an appendix surgery in ninth grade. I had some kind of insurance that covered things, but it wasn't the same as the insurance that a citizen has here. It was an assistance, a program for undocumented people. I was also seeing a therapist during that time

"A girl in sixth grade recently took her own life because kids bullied her since her parents were undocumented. I wish things were different because that affects kids. It affected me too—having to learn English and everything that came with it.

"I hope that one day I can go back to Peru. I just hope nothing bad happens to my grandmother. When I go back, I want to take her out. I will visit my grandfather's grave."

While undocumented parents fight to push their families forward despite their demonization, their undocumented children simultaneously fight a similar battle to achieve their American dream.