

Twenty-three year old Rosa Fernandez came to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic at the age of 14. Nearly eight years later, she became a U.S. citizen.

Now a New York City resident, she believes the government should reach out to illegal immigrant youth. She told us that getting a good education is one of the biggest challenges for immigrants in the U.S.

Non-U.S. born immigrants are barred from college opportunities, such as in-state tuition rates, state and federal grants and loans, most private scholarships, and the ability to legally work their way through college. Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton thinks this has to change.

The DREAM Act, which Clinton supports, is proposed federal legislation. It would give high school students who serve in the army or attend college the ability gain legal status.

Like Rosa, my mom came to the U.S. as a citizen of another country. My mom, Rosemarie, came from the Philippines when she was 5. Not until high school did she become a citizen.

Obtaining citizenship was a long process, but it allowed her to attend college, unlike many of the 65,000 immigrants who graduate from U.S. high schools each year. These students like their U.S.-born peers aspire to pursue higher education.

The Dream Act restores states' rights to offer in-state tuition to immigrant students residing in their state.

For Y-Press, I'm Becky Mangan.