I wish I could write a very different prologue for my dear friend’s book. I wish that Dr. Michael A. Olivas and I could reflect on the advancement of immigration reform since we worked tirelessly together in New Mexico, where I served as governor from 2003 to 2011. We knew we were ahead of our time when we passed the most progressive residency law for undocumented students in the United States. We just didn’t know how far ahead we were. Despite being a headline issue for the 2016 presidential campaign, it feels as if we are further away than ever before from passing comprehensive and effective immigration reform. Rather, today’s dialogue is one of combativeness, not negotiation, and it is being driven by fearmongers, racial stereotypes, and misinformation.

Michael’s book sets the record straight. It is an exhaustive and honest examination of where we have gone wrong and where we can still go right. If only *Perchance to DREAM* could be required reading for every member of Congress and elected official in the United States.

I first met Michael after his father, Sabino Olivas III, a prominent Albuquerque accountant, agreed to serve as the treasurer for my first congressional campaign. Later as governor I would often turn to Michael for advice. In 2005, at his urging, New Mexico passed one of the most progressive residency and scholarship laws in the country. Undocumented immigrants were eligible for state residency after twelve months and then immediately eligible for Lottery Scholarships, which gave them reduced tuition at our colleges and universities. This occurred when our neighbor Arizona was passing some of the strictest anti-immigrant

laws in the country that denied undocumented immigrants—including children—basic social services and made all Latinos subject to humiliating searches at the whim of any law enforcement officer.

In 2005 in New Mexico, like in the country today, we were at a crossroads. There was escalating violence at our borders, and many were fleeing in search of a better life here. We could choose to pass laws that helped integrate and support our immigrant community or laws that hindered and hurt them. I have always felt that there is a decided positive in biculturalism and living and working together, so that is where I, with Michael’s help, directed my legislative energy. In addition to the residency law, as governor I also signed legislation to make undocumented immigrants eligible for driver’s licenses and to expand their access to health care.

Those legislative battles were not easy. Immigration was a divisive issue, one that never was popular, even in a predominantly Hispanic state like New Mexico. Those fights with Michael were well fought, but they wouldn’t have been necessary at all had Congress ever stepped up to the plate to pass immigration reform. And we are still waiting. That’s why Michael’s book is critical reading at this time in our nation’s history. The Hispanic population has been the principal driver of US population growth since 2000. Yet it still feels like our voices are not being heard in the political and social realm. Democrats—my party—often rely on Latino votes, though once elected they seem all too willing to use DREAMers as political pawns. The path to citizenship becomes a bargaining chip on the negotiation table.

Michael was in the immigration law field before it was a field. He is not only one of our nation’s leading experts in immigration law and history but also one of the first. He approaches this book, which compiles decades of work, not as an advocate or activist but as an observer and historian who has witnessed and documented the lengthy and roundabout efforts of DREAMers to become citizens of the country that they have called home since childhood. He eloquently and expertly details the trials and tribulations of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Contrary to the divisive rhetoric in the media, DACA remains enormously popular with Americans. Only a scholar with his depth and experience could give us such a clear and concise narrative on this complicated issue. Michael recounts his own late conversion to
DACA and the dismay and disappointment at watching the promising and generous program be pushed to the brink of elimination by a barrage of angry sound bites and tweets.

Most important, this book is an homage and tribute to the thousands of DREAMers who have shared their stories with Michael. DACA only came into existence thanks to the brave young people who began a campaign of sit-ins and marches to bring attention to the plight of immigrant youth in this country. Many of these outspoken youngsters risked deportation and separation from their families to come forward and fight for a more secure existence.

Their story, no matter how it ends, deserves to be on the shelves along with other Americans’ history. I only hope that one day we can coax Michael out of retirement so that he may write the final chapter on DACA. I still believe that chapter could end with DREAMers becoming legal citizens of the country they call home.

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