Professor Olivas was quoted in an article published by *The Associated Press* and distributed through various news outlets. The article discusses an undocumented college student whose impending deportation was suspended. The student received support from a U.S. senator and a state governor.

[http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5j458s_6IMstMZVGj9KddQtr3rPtg?docId=217e1fb1f39d47ad974a1ba635c5dd90](http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5j458s_6IMstMZVGj9KddQtr3rPtg?docId=217e1fb1f39d47ad974a1ba635c5dd90)

**Conn. senator, governor helped student stay in US**

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HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Two years into a fight to stay in the U.S., Mexican college student Mariano Cardoso learned of a victory last week — not from immigration authorities, but from a U.S. senator who had taken up his cause.

On a call to his cell phone, Sen. Richard Blumenthal delivered the news: Homeland Security officials had suspended Cardoso's deportation, allowing him to graduate next month and work in the United States.

"He told me we had a lot to celebrate, but I told him I had to go to class," Cardoso said. "I didn't know what he was talking about."

It was a culmination of the Democratic senator's deep personal involvement in the case. Advocates say the supporting role he played, along with that of Connecticut's Democratic governor, proved critical to winning a reprieve, but also highlights a fractured immigration policy in which decisions can turn on the influence of one's supporters.

The Obama administration is facing growing pressure from Democrats and Latino groups to protect illegal immigrants like Cardoso, 23, a community college student who has lived in the United States since his family took him here as a toddler. Legislation known as the Dream Act would give them a path to legal status as long as they enrolled in college or joined the military, but it has failed several times in Congress, most recently in December. The government does grant exemptions, but advocates say they are handed out erratically.

For Cardoso, the high-level connections resulted from a deliberate public relations strategy.

He had been targeted for deportation since August 2008, when immigration agents discovered his status after intervening in a gathering in his uncle's backyard. With his legal options dwindling, he reached out in February to a student immigrant organization, United We Dream, which coached him on seeking and handling publicity. The first step was a student-organized demonstration at Trinity College, though he said he was reluctant at first.

"I was afraid that agents were going to come out and take me again," Cardoso said.
A petition circulated on his behalf. Reporters began telling his story. Then he met in person with
Blumenthal, who reached out to Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Two weeks ago, Gov.
Dannel P. Malloy asked the agency to let Cardoso stay and contribute to the only country he's
ever known.

By all accounts, it was the politicians' involvement that made the difference.

"Fortunately you have an engaged member of Congress who was willing to stand up in this case,
but what about others who don't have the same kind of access?" said Wendy Sefsaf,
communications director for the nonprofit American Immigration Council in Washington. "That
person is incredibly vulnerable."

In response to questions about apparent inconsistencies, an ICE spokesman said the agency has
wide discretion and cases are handled on their merits.

"ICE takes extraordinary steps to ensure that humanitarian concerns and individual
circumstances are given top priority among those who come before us as part of the
administrative process," Chuck Jackson, a Boston-based spokesman, said in a statement.

Homeland Security officials have said their priority is to deport alien criminals, not college
students. But critics say the government needs to do more to make sure that is reflected in its
enforcement.

In an April 13 letter to President Barack Obama, 22 mostly Democratic senators asked him to
suspend deportations for students who might have been eligible for legal status under the Dream
Act — young people brought to the United States as children, who in many cases consider
themselves American, speak English and have no ties to or family living in their native countries.
If such blanket protection is not possible, the senators suggested streamlining the process for
students to seek authorization to stay individually.

Blumenthal's office said it has not heard of a response to the letter. The White House did not
respond to requests for comment.

Gaby Pacheco, the United We Dream coordinator who coached Cardoso, said her organization
also has been lobbying the administration for changes that she says will be critical to Obama's
support among Hispanic voters.

"We've gotten to the point that giving a speech or calling for reform is not enough. He is going to
have to deliver in order to satisfy the community," said Pacheco, whose group is working with
about 17 other students like Cardoso who are facing deportation.

The opposition has come from Republicans and groups such as Americans for Legal
Immigration, whose president, William Gheen, said Cardoso should not be taking a college seat
that could be going to a student whose family did not break immigration laws.
While several other students in Cardoso's situation have gone public with their stories in hopes of staying, immigration law expert Michael A. Olivas said they could be jeopardizing parents or other relatives who are here illegally. In most cases, he said, their best strategy is to try to stay off the radar of immigration authorities and wait for a change in policy.

"If you have to go to the press or you have to get a member of Congress to save one of these kids ... then it's just very inefficient and dangerous and frankly undermining because it just gives more fuel to the nativists," said Olivas, a professor at the University of Houston Law Center.

Cardoso, of New Britain, Conn., said he is concerned for his father, who has helped pay his tuition with landscaping jobs. His younger brother and sister have citizenship because they were born in the United States.

He is due to graduate next month from Capital Community College in Hartford with a liberal arts degree, and he has begun exploring other degree programs since winning the yearlong, renewable stay from the government.

He initially thought he would become a civil engineer or a math teacher. In light of his successful campaign to stay, however, he has begun considering a career in communications.