

SHORT FILM EXPOSES DILEMMA FACED BY UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANT WOMEN



A short film, titled “The Call” released by the global human rights organization Breakthrough , tells the story of the impossible choices immigrant women must make and how a woman is torn between the love of her child whom she needs to protect but cannot owing to the inhumane legal system. The film is an attempt to bring immigrant women’s rights to the front of the political agenda in this election season. Based on a true story, the film shows that people like Sonia are confronted with situations wherein they had to make “impossible choices.” The film is a retort to new policy that keeps out illegal immigrants, placing their safety at risk. Surveys have shown that immigrant women face sexual assault, domestic abuse, and other violence pretty frequently but are afraid to file complaints because of the fear of being deported. In the five and half minute film we see a Hispanic lady, Sonia anxiously waiting for her daughter from school, as she is already late. The door opens and a school friend of her daughter enters, followed by her little girl, who hair disheveled, battered face and teary-eyed is in a pitiable state. The friend says that she found her friend lying on the floor and heard the sound of someone fleeing. She had been sexually assaulted. Sonia says that they need to call the hospital or the police, but her daughter asks her not to. “No we can’t, we just can’t. What would happen to you?” she asks Sonia, her undocumented mother. The call could mean medical and legal help for the daughter, but it could also mean exposure for Sonia and she would face the very real threat of deportation. US continually deports parent of U.S.-citizen children. In the first half of 2011, upwards of 46,000 such parents were deported. The film is an answer to recent policy that excludes undocumented immigrants, placing their safety at risk. It is accepted that the federal government will reduce by 50 percent the yearly \$20 billion in aid to hospitals, where the uninsured take treatment. Undocumented immigrants normally seek treatment here. The mother and daughter in the film are played by real-life mother and daughter Zuleyma Guevara (Sonia) and Yadira Guevara (Teresa). Breakthrough president and CEO Mallika Dutt said, “As anyone who watches the film can see, cruel immigration policies rip families apart and force immigrant women to hide in the shadows. These women share our values of family, community and country. They contribute to our economy by creating jobs and growing new businesses. But we continue to deny their basic human rights. It’s time that we all stand up for these women — our neighbors and friends, our mothers and sisters.” The film ends with a host of people, from all wakes of live, assuring Sonia that she is not alone, “I’m here,” they say.