



May 19, 2016

Dear nomination committee,

On behalf of the Iowa League of United Latin American Citizens, I am proud to nominate Monica Reyes for the Business Record's 2016 Women of Influence awards.

Monica has known hardship from an early age – she and her family fled to the United States from Mexico when she was only 3 years old to escape domestic violence – but she hasn't let any of the struggles she's faced stop her from blossoming into a strong-willed young woman who is devoted to making the community a better place for all youth, but specifically Latino youth.

Monica is a true advocate for undocumented Latinos. She knows what it is like first-hand to try to live a life in our country, but one that must be kept partially in the shadows because of the difficulties in receiving citizenship to the United States. The older Monica became, the more she understood what it meant to be part of an undocumented family: Her mother couldn't get a driver's license, and the family had to walk. She wanted to go to college to learn how to become a brain surgeon, but her full ride scholarship was yanked away once it was discovered she was undocumented.

There was racial profiling and discrimination by the police in Monica's town of New Hampton, Iowa. Immigrants were scared to pick up their children from school or go to work. Monica decided to stand up even though it potentially meant her own deportation. She joined with others to create a transportation system for undocumented workers, translated for Latinos who were pulled over, and documented cases of discrimination and profiling. Because of her efforts and others, changes were made in New Hampton, and for the better.

Monica's dreamt to attend college was granted when she became a recipient of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and attended the University of Northern Iowa. It wasn't easy. She worked to pay for college, occasionally dropping out when she could not afford to attend.

Monica and her sister co-founded DREAM Iowa to help Latinos navigate through the DACA process, and to continue the fight against racial discrimination and profiling.

Because of all of her outstanding leadership, I was proud to present Monica with the 2015 Latino Leadership Award at last year's Iowa's Latino Leadership Awards banquet.

It is because of these reasons and many more that I believe Monica Reyes deserves to be named a 2016 Woman of Influence.

Sincerely,

Joe Enríquez Henry,
National LULAC Vice President of the Midwest