## Obama's power over immigration drives Supreme Court dispute

By Mark Sherman
The Associated Press

ASHINGTON — The raging political fight over immigration comes to the Supreme Court April 18 in a dispute that could affect millions of people who are in the United States illegally.

The court is weighing the fate of Obama administration programs that could shield roughly 4 million people from deportation and grant them the legal right to hold a job.

Among them is Teresa Garcia of suburban Seattle, who has spent 14 years in the United States illegally after staying beyond the expiration of her tourist visa in 2002.

She's already gotten much of what she wanted when she chose not to return to her native Mexico. Her two sons are benefitting from an earlier effort that applies to people who were brought here illegally as children. Garcia's 11-year-old daughter is an American citizen.

"That's why I come, for the opportunity for the children and because it is much safer here," the 45-year-old Garcia said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Now, she would like the same for herself and her husband, a trained accountant who works construction jobs. Neither can work legally.

"To have a Social Security number, that means for me to have a better future. When I say better future, we are struggling with the little amount of money my husband is getting for the whole family. It makes for stress every day. We struggle to pay for everything," Garcia said.

programs nounced by President Barack Obama in November 2014 would apply to parents whose children are citizens or are living in the country legally. Eligibility also would be expanded for the president's 2012 effort that helped Garcia's sons. More than 700,000 people have taken advantage of that earlier program, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). The new program for parents and the expanded program for children could reach as many as 4 million people, according to the nonparti-Migration Policy Institute.

Texas and 25 other states sued to block the new initiatives soon after they were announced, and lower courts have ruled in their favor. The programs

have never taken effect.

The states, joined by congressional Republicans,

argue that Obama doesn't the power to have effectively change immigration law. When he announced the measures 17 months ago, Obama said he was acting under his own authority because congress had failed to overhaul the immigration system. The Senate had passed legislation on a bipartisan vote, but House Republicans refused to put the matter to a vote.

"Fundamentally, we don't think the president has the statutory or constitutional authority to issue these executive actions," said Texas attorney general Ken Paxton.

House Republicans told the court that Obama is claiming the power "to decree that millions of



individuals may live, work, and receive benefits in this country even though federal statutes plainly prohibit them from doing so."

The administration and

immigration advocates say the immigration orders are neither unprecedented nor even unusual. Rather, they say, Obama's programs build on past efforts by Democratic and RepubliSUPREME COURT HEARINGS. Teresa Garcia, right, helps her daughter, Alondra Miranda, age 11, get ready for school at their home in Federal Way, Washington, south of Seattle. Garcia, who has spent 14 years in the United States illegally after staying beyond the expiration of her tourist visa in 2002, is one of millions who could be affected when the political fight over immigration comes to the U.S. Supreme Court and the court weighs the fate of Obama administration programs that could shield roughly 4 million people from deportation and grant them the legal right to hold a job. (AP Photo/Ted S. Warren)

can administrations to use discretion in deciding whom to deport.

The court's last major immigration decision, the 2012 case *Arizona v. U.S.*, lends some support to this view.

"A principal feature of the removal system is the broad discretion exercised by immigration officials. Federal officials, as an initial matter, must decide whether it makes sense to pursue removal at all," wrote Justice Anthony Kennedy. "Discretion in the enforcement of immigration law embraces immediate human concerns. Unauthorized workers trying to support their families, for example, likely pose less danger than alien smugglers or aliens who commit a serious crime."

The administration and its supporters said the challenged programs do not offer blanket protection, but depend on case-Continued on page 9



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