

**The Associated Press State & Local Wire**

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**SoCal students get civics lesson from teacher's immigration woes**

**Montclair, California**

**A high school English teacher's immigration woes have turned into a real-life civics lesson for his students.**

**Grant Keaney, a 36-year-old teacher at Montclair High School, said he didn't know his U.S. work visa had expired when he headed to his native Canada for a Christmastime visit. Now he can't get back to California, where he has taught for eight years.**

**When word spread of Keaney's plight, hundreds of students and dozens of teachers signed petitions asking Rep. David Dreier, R-Glendora, to help Keaney return. More than 400 names were collected by the end of the last week.**

**"He always knew what we needed to do and made us confident," said Lindsey Powers, 16, one of Keaney's students. "Without him teaching us, we are not able to be our best."**

**Keaney's attorney, Mark McKinnis, said his client's work visa expired because his former immigration lawyer missed deadlines for filing required paperwork.**

**The teacher said he was told by his previous lawyer that he could travel across the border but learned he couldn't get back into the U.S. a few days before his scheduled return.**

**"I shouldn't have ever come to Canada before fixing it," Keaney said in a phone interview from Toronto.**

**McKinnis said he believes it could take eight months to fix the mess unless Dreier's office can speed things up.**

**"We are obviously working with him, and we hope to try to get this resolved as quickly as possible," said Dreier spokesman Mark Harmsen.**