**My Faith Calls on Me to Stand with Immigrant Youth**

From the earliest days of [Sunday school/Hebrew School and throughout seminary], my faith has taught and called me to welcome the stranger, stand with the vulnerable, and love my neighbor. Now, as a **father/mother, minister, and [Tennessean]**, I am proud to demonstrate these values in my daily life and service at **[name of congregation]**.

It is because of those values that I am calling on Congress to act to protect Dreamers, the young people who grew up in the United States undocumented. The administration terminated the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which protects nearly 800,000 immigrants from deportation and allows them to work legally in the United States. If Congress does not act, DACA permits will expire on a rolling basis starting March 6. I call on **[my members of Congress]** to do everything in their power to pass the Dream Act of 2017.

**[choose a scripture passage below based on your religious tradition, or include your own]**

In the Bible, God commands “Bring water to the thirsty, meet the fugitive with bread… For they have fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, from the bent bow, and from the stress of battle.” (Isaiah 21:14-15)

The Quran instructs “And (as for) those who believed and fled and struggled hard in Allah's way, and those who gave shelter and helped, these are the believers truly; they shall have forgiveness and honorable provision.” (Quran 8:74)

The Torah reads “And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.” (Deuteronomy 10:19)

From the [earliest books] in the **[Bible/Torah/Quran]**, our faith calls on us to show mercy and hospitality to the sojourner. We are called to treat them with dignity, respect, and love, providing the same welcome that we ourselves would hope for. As Americans, we live in a country built in large part by the hard work, dreams, and determination of generations of immigrants -- many of whom were our ancestors. Sadly, it seems that our legislators have forgotten these lessons and have acted without compassion.

Dreamers and immigrant youth are part of our country’s future. They are already on their way to being the next generation of doctors, teachers, lawyers, business owners, craftsmen, caregivers, and musicians. The Dream Act of 2017 would allow DACA-recipients and other Dreamers to pursue citizenship in this nation we all call home.

We have a moral obligation to welcome the immigrant, uphold the innate dignity of all people, and affirm our nation’s greatest value of creating brighter futures for all of us. Immigrant youth are no different from our own ancestors who came to this country searching for the same chance at a better life, and they are no different than our **[Biblical]** ancestors who were once strangers who found welcome and were called to do the same.

I have grave concerns about proposals to attach harmful immigration enforcement increases with relief for Dreamers. Our outdated immigration system leaves millions unjustly detained, separated from family, and locked out of regularizing their status. I call on Congress to enact the Dream Act of 2017 and then turn towards realizing an immigration system that affirms the sanctity of family unity, respects the rights and dignity of all, and makes the American Dream truly achievable.

I join faith communities across traditions, who have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to immigrant youth and their families, and are calling on elected officials to champion policies that would create a [path to citizenship](http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/issues/immigration-reform/) for undocumented individuals in the United States. We need our elected leaders to protect Dreamers and support legislation that would provide a permanent solution for them to remain in the country they call home.

Passing the Dream Act of 2017 is the right thing, and the American thing, to do.