



## RELIGIOUS LEADERS APPLAUD THE REINTRODUCTION OF THE DREAM ACT

**Washington D.C.** – Today, Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) introduced the bipartisan Dream Act of 2017, which would offer a pathway to legal status for immigrant youth. Faith communities across traditions have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to immigrant youth and their families, and will continue to do so throughout the efforts to pass this legislation, including advocating that the DACA program remain in place until this bill is enacted. Faith leaders across denominations released the following quotes supporting the Dream Act’s re-introduction:

“I am heartened by the news that a new version of the Dream Act is being introduced in Congress. It is long past time to protect people who were brought to this country as children. Nearly 800,000 people, known as ‘the Dreamers,’ were granted DACA status (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and should not now be in danger of deportation. As a faith leader, I believe it is immoral to criminalize people whose families have had to leave other lands, often fleeing violence and extreme poverty, in order to survive. The Dream Act is the first step towards providing a path to citizenship for people who are already a part of the fabric of this nation. It is my hope that one day we will enact policies that recognize our interdependence as one human family.” – **Rev. Susan Frederick Gray, President, Unitarian Universalist Association**

“The CWS network is strongly committed to standing with all of our immigrant brothers and sisters, including undocumented young people,” **said Rev. John L. McCullough, CWS President and CEO.** “We fully support this legislation and call on all Members of Congress to cosponsor the Dream Act of 2017 to give young immigrants the opportunity to fulfill the American dream. It is vital that this bill be considered in its own right, and not used as a political football to increase spending on building a wall or mounting a deportation force. The passage of a Dream Act is long overdue, as CWS has stood alongside immigrant rights groups and other religious organizations for more than a decade trying to enact such reforms. We pray that legislators remember the common values we all aspire to, which is the most basic of Sunday school lessons: to love our neighbors. There is much that is unknown right now, but what we do know is that God has called us to welcome our immigrant brothers and sisters – CWS will do that no matter what it takes.”

“As Jesus taught us in Matthew 25, the way we treat the most vulnerable members of our society, including immigrants-the biblical “stranger”, reflects how we treat Christ himself. As faith leaders, we urge members of Congress to prioritize the common good and cosponsor the DREAM Act. Every day millions of families live in fear of disruption or dislocation because of one member’s immigration status. It has become abundantly clear that immigration reform is the moral test of our politics. The 11 million undocumented women, men, and children in the United States are our brothers and sisters. They are our neighbors and church members. Our faith in Jesus Christ will not allow us to remain on the sidelines in such a time as this.”- **Jim Wallis, President and Founder of Sojourners**

“Over more than a decade, Dreamers have tirelessly worked to be acknowledged and afforded the opportunity to fully thrive as U.S. citizens. Time and time again, Congress has let them down. It’s been

16 years since the first bipartisan introduction of similar legislation. These young people should not be required to jump through hoops or wait years to prove themselves worthy of staying in this country that we all call home. Quakers across the country have asked the Friends Committee on National Legislation to work toward a society where everyone's potential may be fulfilled – in keeping with this faith-based vision, we know that Dreamers deserve nothing less than a swift pathway to citizenship. We applaud Senators Graham and Durbin for working together on this bipartisan legislative fix, and we call on Congress to expeditiously pass the Dream Act of 2017.” – **Diane Randall, Executive Secretary of the Friends Committee on National Legislation (Quakers)**

“The Presbyterian Church (USA) reiterates its support for a pathway to citizenship for DREAMers, who have fought so tirelessly for their rights and lives to be respected and their voices to be heard. These young people are the future of our church and our nation — when they suffer, we suffer. They have been caught in this limbo for far too long, not knowing if they will be ripped apart from their families and communities. This is not a question of politics, but rather the morality of the American people. We ask for Congress to act on values that are foundational to our faith — to welcome the stranger and love our neighbors — and co-sponsor the reintroduction of the DREAM Act. Presbyterians will continue to stand beside them in solidarity, seeking justice for our neighbors who simply want to stay in a country that we all call home.” – **Rev. Jimmie Hawkins, Office of Public Witness, Presbyterian Church (USA)**

“Bread for the World fully supports and urges all members of Congress to cosponsor the DREAM Act. Children, including DREAMers are a trust that God has given to us. They are the future of our communities, and our churches. This legislation provides an opportunity for young adults to continue to thrive and for our nation to prosper.” – **Bishop José García, senior advisor for prayer and strategic initiatives, Bread for the World**

“It is time that Congress ensures the vibrant future of our nation by passing this Dream Act. Dreamers, their parents, and other undocumented individuals in the U.S. simply want an opportunity to succeed. They need protection so they can live without fear and fully participate in our society. The introduction of this bipartisan Dream Act is a good first step on the road to immigration reform that promises a path to citizenship for all the hardworking individuals who are positively contributing to our communities and our society. The direct beneficiaries of the Dream Act would be the undocumented young people who have grown up in the United States and are fully participating in their communities, but the reality is that our entire society will benefit by allowing these young folks to move without fear into the center of our society.” –**Sister Simone Campbell, SSS, Executive Director of NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice.**

“Following the biblical mandate to love, seek justice, and offer hospitality, The United Methodist Church supports the DREAM Act and other efforts to compassionately reform the United States’ immigration system. Since 2012, the Church has collectively urged Congress to adopt this vital legislation and provide comfort, home, and opportunity to 800,000 young people and their families. Today, Congress has another opportunity to prioritize love, justice and hospitality by passing the DREAM Act. We hope that they join us in welcoming immigrants to the United States as we do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.” – **The Rev. Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe, General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church**

“HIAS, the global Jewish nonprofit that protects refugees, applauds Senators Durbin and Graham for reintroducing the DREAM Act. The young men and women who will benefit from this legislation are

already contributing to our country in countless ways, facing challenges many of us can only imagine with dignity, determination, and strength. They belong to this country and embody the best of America. We thank Senator Graham and Senator Durbin for their leadership and urge Congress to enact this legislation.” – **Melanie Nezer, Senior Vice President for Public Affairs, HIAS**

“Young immigrants have brought vitality, stability, and giftedness to our communities and churches. We must protect them from deportation; but moreover, provide a way for their contributions to become permanently embedded into the future of this country. The CRC stands with DREAMers today, as it has for sixteen years as we have waited and advocated for the crucial passage of the Dream Act. For too long, the path to citizenship has been a dream; we call on Congress to make it a reality.” – **Rev. Reggie Smith, Director of Office of Social Justice and Office of Race Relations, Christian Reformed Church in North America**

“Immigrant youth and young adults in our Disciples colleges and universities and throughout institutions and communities around the country are our neighbors, friends, and family members. We are grateful for the contributions of gifts and courage offered through their lives, and we remain deeply committed to both them and their families. Today, we celebrate the introduction of The DREAM Act, and pray that the relief it offer for immigrant families will bring about a living out of the Spirit’s intent that ‘our daughters and sons shall prophesy...and dream dreams.’” - **Rev. Ronald J. Degges, President, Disciples Home Missions, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. & Canada**

“The DREAM Act provides desperately needed relief for individuals who came to the United States at an early age through no doing of their own, so that they can pursue higher education and contribute to American society, regardless of their immigration status. These young people are vital for our nation’s future. They must be given opportunities, consistent with the high standards and requirements established in the bill, to complete their education, legalize their status, and contribute back to society to help build the American dream for future generations.” – **Richard T. Foltin, Director of National and Legislative Affairs, American Jewish Committee (AJC)**

“The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) applauds the introduction of The Dream Act 2017 and thanks Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) for their bipartisan effort to honor the gift that Dreamers are to this country. Catholic sisters are committed to the gospel mandate to welcome the stranger. They have a long history of accompanying the immigrant community. They continue to minister to these aspiring citizens in schools, hospitals, and service agencies along the southern border and across the country. They know first-hand the fear and uncertainty that plagues these young people. We urge members of Congress of both parties to reaffirmation of the values upon which this nation was founded by supporting this common sense path to justice for Dreamers and stability for families, communities, and local economies. LCWR and its members will continue to press for relief for families, an end to needless deportations, and the closure of all family detention centers. We will continue to advocate for bipartisan legislation that fixes our broken immigration system. We will continue to stand in solidarity with families, regardless of immigration status, who labor daily to provide safety and security for their children. We will continue to walk with Dreamers and their families and to work with all who struggle for justice for immigrants.” - **Joan Marie Steadman, CSC, Executive Director, LCWR**

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