



Pass a Clean Dream Act of 2017, Oppose Expanded Enforcement

President Trump ended the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program which leaves 800,000 young people facing an unknown future. He also requested billions of dollars more from Congress to hire more immigration enforcement and border patrol agents, permanently expand immigrant detention, further militarize bi-national and indigenous border communities, and build costly and ineffectual additional border wall infrastructure. As people of faith, we are called to stand with Dreamers and against harmful spending. **We call on Congress to immediately pass a clean Dream Act of 2017 without any increased enforcement.**

- » **Slamming the door on Dreamers is the wrong choice for our nation.** We invite Members of Congress to live up to our nation's values and act with moral authority. With the end of DACA, members of Congress must act immediately to ensure 800,000 DACA recipients are not deported away from the country they call home. Recipients went on record with the U.S. government to apply for DACA. Congress must act now to protect DACA recipients from imminent deportation by passing the Dream Act of 2017, which provides a previously unattainable pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who grew up in the United States.
- » **Congress should invest in long term solutions rather than endless enforcement.** Any additional funding for agents, detention beds, and border militarization means permanent, expensive changes to the immigration enforcement machinery and billions of dollars spent without addressing the problem: a punitive, outdated immigration system. The bipartisan Dream Act of 2017 is a first step. Congress should then turn to broader immigration reforms that will allow all our communities to flourish.
- » **Additional funding for endless enforcement comes at the expense of vital community programs.** Education, housing, and nutritional assistance programs promote public safety and alleviate poverty. Poverty-focused international assistance reduces the need for people to have to migrate. Any additional funding for enforcement would reduce funding for these critical programs. Congress has an opportunity to ensure billions of dollars are invested in our collective future rather than for deporting Dreamers, their loved ones, or other community members.

**Please pass a clean Dream Act of 2017 (H.R. 3440/S. 1615)
without attaching it to increased immigration enforcement.**

interfaithimmigration.org

For more information, contact Interfaith Immigration Coalition co-chairs:

Hannah Evans, Friends Committee on National Legislation, hannah@fcnl.org

Tammy Alexander, Mennonite Central Committee U.S., talexander@mcc.org

September 2017

The Dream Act of 2017 (S. 1615/H.R. 3440)

For more than 16 years Dreamers have waited for Congress to act, and their future is unclear. It is imperative that Congress enact an immediate, lasting permanent solution and does not use Dreamers as bargaining chips or political pawns. We urge Congress to expeditiously pass the Dream Act without attaching it to additional enforcement.

The Dream Act of 2017 would allow undocumented immigrants who entered the United States when they were younger than 18 and have lived in the country for four years to apply for a conditional permanent resident status. If they satisfy work, educational, or military service requirements, they would be eligible to apply for a green card and follow the regular process toward citizenship.

President Trump ended the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program on September 5. The program allowed almost 800,000 immigrants who grew up in this country undocumented to apply to work legally in the United States free from fear of deportation. In order to apply, DACA recipients had to go through a background check, fit certain qualifications, pay around \$500 in application fees, and stay in compliance with the program. Recipients have to renew their status every two years and repay the application fee. If Congress does not act by March 5, thousands of DACA recipients will be deported.

DACA recipients are living in all 50 states. 70% were [10 years old or younger](#) when they came to the United States - so they know no other country but this one. All have been in the U.S. for at least 10 years, 23% have a U.S. citizen child, and 71% have a U.S. citizen spouse, sibling or child. 91% of recipients are legally employed and paying taxes. 45% of are still in school, with 72% pursuing a bachelor's degree or higher. The average age of DACA recipients is 25.

Values Driven Immigration Policy

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition is brought together across many theological traditions with a common call to seek just policies that lift up the God-given dignity of every individual. We look for faithful partnership with members of Congress to continue our work to protect the rights, dignity, and safety of all refugees and migrants. The Dream Act is just one, important, and long overdue solution to right injustices present in our current immigration system. According to the IIC platform, our nation's immigration policies should:

- » Prioritize family unity
- » Create a process that leads to legal status and citizenship
- » Improve access to the legal immigration system
- » Protect all workers and reduce exploitation
- » Emphasize community safety
- » Protect human rights in enforcement practices and border policies
- » Ensure prosecutorial and judicial discretion
- » Reform detention policies
- » Protect vulnerable population in the U.S. and abroad
- » Facilitate immigrant and refugee integration
- » Strive for lasting solutions

For more information, contact Interfaith Immigration Coalition co-chairs:

Hannah Evans, Friends Committee on National Legislation, hannah@fcnl.org

Tammy Alexander, Mennonite Central Committee U.S., talexander@mcc.org

September 2017