



November 1, 2017

Dear Members of Congress,

I write to you today on behalf of more than 100,000 Catholic Sisters and supporters of NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice to urge you to pass the Dream Act now. As people of faith, we are taught that the two greatest commandments are to love God and love our neighbors. **I want to be abundantly clear: recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals are our neighbors, and their home is here. It is time that our legislation reflect their contributions to our communities; our nation needs you to pass the Dream Act without delay.**

Since the announcement of the end of DACA, recipients have worried and feared knowing that they will soon be at risk for deportation. This undermines their families and our communities. Our driving force for passing the Dream Act should be our acknowledgement that DACA recipients have for years given their time, resources, and money to prove that they are committed to our nation. Now, we must respond by demonstrating our commitment to their success.

**The Dream Act is the best legislative solution for Dreamers and for our nation.** It provides an opportunity for young people to fully integrate into our society without fear. It also gives voters and activists across the country a bipartisan bill to rally support around.

Less than a week ago, Pope Francis called us to action. *"To all people (of the U.S.) I ask: take care of the migrant who is a promise of life for the future. To migrants: take care of the country that welcomes you; accept and respect its laws and walk together along that path of love."* It is time for us as a nation to create a permanent solution for Dreamers, who have been positively contributing to our communities for the majority of their lives. We must honor and acknowledge their dignity and pass the Dream Act immediately.

**On the following pages are quotes from my fellow Nuns on the Bus sharing their experiences of the positive contributions of Dreamers in their communities and expressing urgency for passage of the Dream Act.** Please feel free to share these statements as are helpful to you, and if you have any questions you can contact Ashley Wilson, NETWORK's Communications Manager, at [awilson@networklobby.org](mailto:awilson@networklobby.org) or 202-601-7856.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. Simone Campbell SSS".

Sister Simone Campbell, SSS

## **Quotes from Catholic Sisters in Support of the Dream Act**

"Congressional inaction on the Dream Act has real-life consequences. Every day that passes means more suffering, anxiety, and fear in the lives of Dreamers, their families, and our communities. As people of faith, we are all called to uphold the biblical mandate to love thy neighbor. Make no mistake: Dreamers are our neighbors and their home is here in the U.S. The solution is simple: Congress must act and end this suffering by passing the Dream Act now." – **Sister Simone Campbell, SSS, Executive Director of NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice**

"As a Holy Names Sister I have taught immigrants in Los Angeles for years. My DREAMER students work hard and contribute to our economy, culture and city. I have seen firsthand the fear of family separation in their eyes. They are our friends and neighbors, their home is the USA. I urge all members of Congress to pass the Dream Act." -- **Sister Susan Maloney, SNJM, Los Angeles, CA**

"As a Sister of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary working with migrants and asylum seekers in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and these last five years in Texas, the stories of the joys and difficulties of their lives is always present. Family is a priority! Do not separate them! Dreamers are leadership people in our midst. I urge legislators to pass a clean Dream Act now." - **Sister Sharon Altendorf, PBVM, San Antonio, TX**

"As a Sister of St. Joseph, I worship in a Catholic parish that offers the gift of cultural diversity, including the gift of several DACA recipients. Earlier this year I gathered with some of these young men and women to listen to their stories, to absorb the anxiety and fear they expressed over their uncertain future and to offer my continued support and advocacy for the DREAM ACT on their behalf. These young people are not strangers to me; they are part of our worshipping parish family who gathers each Sunday to express our unity as the Body of Christ. In their name and in the name of so many other DACA recipients who are contributing to our economy, offering their gifts and talents to their civil and faith communities and who desire to become American citizens, I urge all members of Congress to pass the Dream Act of 2017." - **Mary Beth Hamm, SSJ, Reisterstown, MD**

"Migrant farmworkers bring food to our tables at poverty wages. I know of children from these families who have struggled against all kinds of obstacles to attend college in order to better their lives and their communities. Why would we deny them their Dream? As a Franciscan Sister, I know we are all sisters and brothers. I urge you to pass the Dream Act." - **Sister Jan Cebula, OSF, Clinton, IA**

"Senator Portman and Representative Wenstrup, I am a Sister of Mercy in your district. Daily I see how hard Jose is working part time to support and encourage other DACA youth while completing his college courses. His family has been in Cincinnati his entire growing up years. I ask you to pass a clean Dream Act now that will lift a huge cloud of worry from his shoulders and ensure that this fine young man can continue to be a contributing member of our community."- **Sister Carren Herring, RSM Cincinnati, OH**

"I am a product of an immigrant. My grandfather came from Germany before World War I speaking no English. As a Sister of Mercy and an Associate Professor of social work I have had the privilege of working with students who are immigrants (documented and undocumented). It is beyond my understanding why we do not view dreamers as an asset and gift to this country. Policies and actions that do not welcome dreamers will have consequences about which I, as a citizen, am very concerned." - **Sister Linda Werthman, RSM, Farmington Hills, MI**

"As a Dominican sister who has served as an immigration lawyer in Chicago for more than 3 decades and at the jail, South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, Texas, I urge the Congress and president to pass a CLEAN Dream Act. This will allow, not only the DACA-mented population, but also the other young people in our community who may qualify under the Dream Act of 2017 to get on a path to permanent resident status and eventually US citizenship. These young folks are our present community and future leaders. They deserve a chance to belong and grow into their full potential. Do we want to add to the already millions of displaced persons in our world today?" - **Sister Bernadine Karge, OP, JD, Chicago, IL**

"As a School Sister of Notre Dame who went to prison with the United Farmworkers in 1973, I am asking that we recognize the dignity of our current agricultural workers, many who are immigrants and grant them and their families a safe path to citizenship." - **Sister Judith Best, SSND, Saint Louis, MO**

"As a member of Nuns on the Bus and a Catholic Religious congregation founded to meet the needs of the early immigrants, I urge all members of Congress to pass a clean DREAM Act without any of the principles and policies that were outlined in President Trump's October 8 letter to the House and Senate regarding immigration. Every one of these DREAMers is a child of God, deserves to be treated with respect and to keep their family united. These individuals are currently living in fear and must not be penalized for their parents actions. Again, I urge you to pass a clean DREAM Act of 2017." - **Sister Joetta Venneman, PBVM, Nazareth, KY**

"Two of us have worked in a Spanish parish for a number of years. Elaine for 30 years and Jeanie for 10 years. We now see and hear of the fear that many of these undocumented people live with every time they leave their home or go to school and work. They do not know if they will still be a family together when night comes. They continue to do everything possible to become citizens. These faith filled hard working people find hope in our support and willingness to walk with them on their journey of life." - **Sister Jeanie Hagedorn, CHM and Sister Elaine Hagedorn, CHM, Des Moines, IA**

"As a Daughter of Charity, I have celebrated and cried with immigrants on the border, in the Bayou and on the streets of Brooklyn. I am consistently awed by their giftedness and the beautiful human tapestry that has always been created by immigrants in the USA. Ironically, now that our country is strong, diverse and realizing the advantages gained from multicultural living, we want to pull up the drawbridge and "protect ourselves" from the very thing that made this country rich. A country cannot deny what it is and still stand. America is a nation of immigrants and a clean Dream Act with a practical and achievable pathway to citizenship for our young people is good for the 100%." - **Sister Mary Ellen Lacy, DC, Hyattsville, MD**

"My community, the Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque, IA, has ministered to immigrants in the heartland and throughout the United States since our founding. My advocacy work for over 25 years is motivated by a call for justice for the most vulnerable among us, and with Pope Francis that demands building "bridges not walls." I urge my Iowa Senators and Representatives to support passage of the Dream Act." - **Sister Richelle Friedman, PBVM, Washington, DC**

"As a Sister of Charity, BVM, I have advocated for immigrants via Network over the last few years, was part of the Nuns on the Bus Immigration reform bus tour in Northern CA, was a participant in the SOA/Nogales event October 2016. I continue to pray vigil, demonstrate and advocate for the DREAMERS." - **Sister Marilyn Wilson, BVM, Sunnyvale, CA**

"Dreamers are a gift to us all. They have lived in this country for most of their lives. They participate and contribute for the good of all. Let us do all we can to pass the DREAM Act." - **Sister Joellen Sbrissa, CSJ, Chicago, IL**

"I'm a Catholic Sister for Christian Community and a human rights attorney in New Orleans, Louisiana. I urge all members of Congress to pass the Dream Act and other compassionate immigration reform bills so families are preserved and all have a safe place to call home. Most of our immigrant brothers and sisters are fleeing extreme violence, government instability, and unsafe situations in their home countries, often created by U.S. militarization and foreign economic policies. It is a moral imperative that we, at a minimum, create a way for immigrants to enter the United States and stay if they so desire to create a new life here." - **Sister Alison McCrary, SFCC, New Orleans, Louisiana**

"The Dream Act is a wonderful opportunity for people coming to the U.S. to reach capacities they could never have imagined. Traveling throughout Iowa with the Nuns on the Bus I met people who are grateful to be here, working hard to meet their goals and hopeful they will be able to remain in the U.S. I have friends who have been here for several years primarily from Central America. They have been given the opportunity to work labor jobs that many U.S. citizens would not choose. However, these friends have been very successful in their work and are providing well for their families. They bring joy and peace to their friends and neighbors. They reach out to others as a 'pay it forward' from their own experiences. My life has been enriched by having them as friends and I thank God for them." - **Sister Mary Bea Snyder, CHM, Davenport, IA**

"I am a Dominican Sister who worked and lived in south central Texas for 20 years. I met and worked with many Mexican-Americans, including Dreamers and their families. These men and women are outstanding citizens—hardworking, trustworthy, devoted to their families, their churches and to the United States of America. They contribute to our national common good and deserve fair treatment." - **Sister Carol Coston, OP, Adrian, MI**

"As a Sister of Mercy of the Americas I am well acquainted with both the generation of young people who are the "Dreamers." Our sisters have accompanied families in Mexico and Central America which is where many of their parents came from. Our work has been to help provide homes, education, and health care for these families. It is always about family for people in these communities. Our Congresswoman, Jackie Spier, has consistently supported our immigrant

families in her district. I pray all members of Congress will hear the cry of the “Dreamers” who have only know the United States as their home.” - **Sister Therese Randolph, RSM, Daly City, CA**

“The DREAM Act is important to me because I imagine the level of anxiety and insecurity that these young Americans experience on a daily basis. There is no excuse for subjecting hundreds of thousands of our sisters and brothers to this kind of needless suffering. They are human beings, not political pawns.” -**Sister Quincy Howard, OP, Washington, DC**

“I am a Sister of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and have worked with Latinos for many years, in the Pilsen area of Chicago. I have been thrilled to know that young people who were brought here as children, educated with us, lived with us, prayed with us and are working with us would be able to continue sharing their gifts and talent with this nation, which has given them so much. I have recently worked with Dreamers who are terrific leaders in their communities and in their professional lives, bettering conditions for immigrants. It tears my heart out to think that they are now facing the stress of uncertainty for themselves as well as for their families, who have given so much to support them in their formative years. Pushing them out of the nation, to places often unknown to them would be excruciating for them, and a terrible loss to the rest of us.” – **Sister Marge Clark, BVM, Washington, DC**