



NETWORK LOBBY FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE

CATHOLIC SISTERS SUPPORT A DACA FIX THAT INCLUDES A PATH TO CITIZENSHIP

Contact: Ashley Wilson | awilson@networklobby.org | 202-601-7856

Sister Simone Campbell, SSS, Executive Director of NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

"It is unconscionable that the Administration and Congress have played political games with the lives of Dreamers and we are now facing a Trump-created DACA deadline that is less than a week away. When Pope Francis addressed Congress in September 2015, he told Congress to respond to migrants 'in a way which is always humane, just and fraternal.' The way Dreamers have been treated – and the looming threat of family separation due to increased deportations – is directly antithetical to this call.

"NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice calls on Congress to immediately pass bipartisan legislation like the Dream Act to provide Dreamers with a path to citizenship and shield them from deportation. There is no question that this is the faithful way forward. Congress must get to work."

Sister Tracy Kemme, SC, Cincinnati, OH

"As a Sister of Charity of Cincinnati, I've worked with migrants for over a decade in South America, Central America, at the U.S./Mexico border, and now at my parish in Cincinnati, Ohio. These migrants are my sisters and brothers, beautiful people of faith whom I know and love. Our policies oppress them and make their everyday a struggle for dignity. With the global Catholic church, I say: This is a moral imperative. Our legislators must pass the Dream Act, and then work to finally achieve bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform."

Sister Jean Miller, Mount Saint Joseph, OH

"As a Sister of Charity, I worked for years in Peru, El Salvador, and recently in Honduras so I know firsthand the situations of violence and death that these people are escaping. When we deport these people we are sending them to death situations. Our mission calls us to 'Welcome the stranger.' The Dream Act will make our country richer."

Sister Mary McCauley, BVM, Dubuque, IA

"From 2002 until 2008 I had the privilege of serving as the Pastoral Administrator of three small rural parishes in Northeast Iowa. One of the parishes was St. Bridget's in Postville, where the infamous immigration raid took place at Agriprocessors on May 12, 2008. As ICE moved into Postville, 389 workers were arrested. This was followed by numerous imprisonments and threats of mass deportation. Lives of loved ones both here and in their home countries were forever changed. Due to the immigration raid many of my young friends were deported. I often had to stand at a bus, hug them, and say good-bye. And always as I said good bye I would express sorrow and ask forgiveness for the way our country had treated them. Fortunately, I did not have to say good bye to all. A few were able to remain. These are my friends who received DACA standing. They are our Dreamers. They are our young men and women who have worked hard, cared for younger brothers and sisters, respected the rule of law, contributed to their neighborhoods, received college educations, are gainfully employed and are sharing their very special gifts with all of us. And now these same friends of mine, due to Trump's rescinding of the DACA program are living in fear. They are stressed. They are confused. They are anxious. Am I going to have to say good-bye to them, too? I hope not!"

Sister Margaret McGuirk, OP, Minneapolis, MN

"For forty years, I have had the privilege of serving in large Latino Catholic Churches in the Bronx, Chicago, and Minneapolis. What is so amazing about this experience is that one can see clearly that immigrants do not come to us empty handed. They come with skills, resilience, initiative and a profound faith that holds their families together and strengthens the very fabric of our nation. I urge Congress to implement a clean DACA bill."

Sister Janice Thome, OP, Garden City, KS

"I am a Dominican Sister of Peace who has served the economic poor in our Ministry of Presence for 20 years. The hope that DACA gave the students, who so want to be our next generation of professionals, was palpable and has become a lived reality as they went to college and graduated or soon will do so. In southwest Kansas, we never have enough teachers to fill all the positions. Now in the second semester, we still have 18 positions with a full-time sub. We always need more medical personnel and law enforcement officers. I urge the continuation of DACA for the sake of immigrants and for the sake of our whole local rural communities. Please also allow it to lead to citizenship."

Sister Bernadine Karge, OP, Chicago, IL

"I am a Dominican Sister who has worked in immigrant communities in Chicago, New York, and Washington DC for the past 4 decades. I have seen firsthand the devastation that family separation has brought to our nation. I have also witnessed the joy when families receive their "green cards" or become naturalized citizens. Jesus said, 'I have come that you may have life and have it to the full.' This is our chance to bring fullness of status to the members of our community already here. I urge the House to implement a DACA fix that includes a pathway to citizenship."

Sister Susan M. Maloney, SNJM, Los Angeles, CA

"As a Sister of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary I have accompanied immigrants from their arrival in the USA to their U.S. citizenship. They work hard, pay taxes and contribute to their local communities. Our faith teaches us that Dreamers are our sisters and brothers; their home is with us. I urge all members of the U.S. Congress to support legislation to fix DACA that includes a pathway to citizenship."

Sister Alison McCrary, SFCC, New Orleans, LA

"As a Catholic nun and social justice attorney who has advocated for those on the margins for many years, I strongly urge the House to create a plan to fix DACA so that it includes a way to citizenship for our brothers and sisters. I have worked locally with our Congress of Day Laborers and nationally with the School of the Americas Watch movement and those experiences have opened my heart and mind to understand the experiences of those forced to move to another country. Migration is often the only option because of the political, economic, and social injustices taking place in one's homeland. It's also often not safe for a person to return to their country of origin and as a result, this is the minimum we owe to those who those who have made the United States their home. As a 36-year-old Sister, many of my colleagues and former classmates were dreamers and are now leaders in our community working for the common good for all of us. We owe it to them to allow them to stay for the benefit of all of us."

Sister Maureen Kelleher, RSHM, Immokalee, FL

"Since 1984 I have worked with immigrants here in southwest Florida, many of whom are farm workers. These, many the parents of DACA youth, are so hardworking and so family oriented. I ask myself what have we come to; we enjoyed such low-priced vegetables because of the labor in the hot sun of these farm worker parents and lured them here in the first place to do this work."

Sister Kathleen Carberry, CSJ, Brentwood, NY

"As a Sister of St. Joseph who has worked with the immigrant community for the past 24 years on Long Island, New York, I have seen the devastation brought on families when a loved one is deported. The infamous MS-13 gang is active in this area, but the young people I see are studying hard in school, working, and want to make a life for themselves in this country. They abhor the gangs. DACA recipients were given such hope, and now they are terrified of possible deportation. There is nothing to return to in their countries of origin, especially El Salvador and Honduras, except violence and poverty. "Whatever you do to the least of my people, that you do to me."

Sister Kay Schwenzer, RSM, Geneva, NY

"I am a Sister of Mercy, and through the Church I have ministered among migrants and immigrants in the Finger Lakes area of New York State for over ten years. I have personally seen the heartbreak that our immigration system has caused families and our faith community when a father or mother has been jailed and deported or jailed for a long period of time. Our young people, once given a chance at normal living under DACA, are now working and studying, but the announcement of the cancellation of DACA causes fear for them and their future. Instead of the love that is due each individual, they receive rejection, suspicion and dislike, which are not Christian attitudes. As a person of faith, I believe that we are all created equal in God's image, and that all are deserving of an opportunity to avail themselves of the resources of this earth. The earth's resources are to be shared, and immigrants are willing to provide honest hard labor to help provide for others. This country needs them."

Sister Jeanie Hagedorn, CHM, Des Moines, IA

"As a Sister of the Humility of Mary I have worked with and taught both children and adult immigrants in Des Moines, Iowa for many years. I have found that, without exception, my students and colleagues are hard-working, family-focused, faith-filled human beings. The children are creative, filled with joy and enthusiasm and have so much potential! We need legislation that will honor the enormous contributions of immigrants in our country. We need legislation that respects their dignity as human persons created by God. We need legislation that will bring them out of the shadows and give them a path to citizenship. *We* need our immigrants as much as *they* need us. I know because they continue to teach *me* as much as I teach *them*. They can teach *all of us* what is an essential value in a democracy, the value of being loving, hard-working, self-sacrificing members of this human family."

Sister Rose Mary Meyer, BVM, Dubuque, IA

"I rejoice every time I see a picture of the Statue of Liberty. She is a beacon of hope in the midst of struggle as we try to live the amazing reality of our connectedness with all creation. My life has been enriched by the lives of DACA recipients who keep hoping that families will not be separated and the flame of freedom will burn brightly. May we all support them with our actions infused with hope for inclusion in all of God's creation. May human-created boundaries be invitations to treasure enriching differences rather than gut-wrenching exclusions."

Sr. Ruth King, SSS, Los Angeles CA

"I am an immigrant myself. My family's migration story started with my older sister who came to the U.S. in 1961 for graduate school with scholarship. Then my brother came in 1964 for graduate school without scholarship. Looking back 40 years, the change of U.S. immigration policy obviously has changed from helping other countries to taking rich people only."

Sister Mary Wendeln, CPpS, Dayton, OH

"I had my first encounter with immigrants receiving their work permits in the early 90's. There is no more joy than to witness the relief for a family when someone has documents. Since 2012, I have had the privilege of filing cases – initial and renewal – for those who qualified for DACA. Now, I see more a sense of frustration from the Dreamers' parents as so many have placed car titles in their names and have a legal driver in the family. Keep families together by passing the Dream Act. There is a tenseness, and they are worn out from fighting. Let's act like adults and pass the Dream Act. In my years of working with the undocumented I do not remember children and youth being so worried about deportations and the separation of their family."

Sister Kathleen Kaiser, CSJ, Kalamazoo, MI

"I worked as a pastoral minister among immigrant families for 15 years and humbly learned to appreciate their work ethic, commitment to their faith and total dedication to family. In order to provide financial college support to their DACA children, I watched parents sacrifice themselves working long hours on dairy farms, chicken ranches and in agricultural fields. These were the same families, parents and kids, who provided music each Sunday for our Hispanic Mass and seasonal religious celebrations at the work sites. These families have given the community and the nation, not only financial support through taxes, but so much of their lives by providing all of us, prime food products because of their labor, and an example of service to others by their selfless commitment to God and their faith community. In justice and the values we hold as United States citizens, we **MUST** pass a DACA fix with a pathway to citizenship."

Sister Marge Clark, BVM, Washington, DC

"I lived in Dubuque, IA at the time of the first major ICE raid, in 2008. I knew Postville, having taught elementary school principals from there and surrounding towns. I saw the devastation of Postville from before the raid to after. The families experienced emotional terror and increased poverty. The town was affected by the closure of restaurants served by the immigrants, the packing plant was closed, and many other jobs in the area were left undone. The entire community suffered. Dreamers have become an integral part of our nation! They are working to bring people together. Dreamers really deserve full citizenship. Without that, many of their leadership skills and deep understandings will not be able to come to the benefit of us all."

Sister Renee Domeier, OSB, St. Joseph, MN

"Has the immigration issue touched my personal life, work, community? Indeed, it has! Since 1996 when I began working with Latinos – documented and undocumented – I have longed for comprehensive immigration reform. I ask myself, when will we, as a nation, recognize that these brothers and sisters are integral to our entire economy and church? When will we grant them the opportunity of a productive life lacking in the constant fear of being deported or separated from family? By March 2018, Congress needs to do the right thing: extend protected status to some 800,000 Dreamers/DACA recipients including a pathway to citizenship. Later, we must face the reality of the other 11 million undocumented immigrants who have been here for years, no longer strangers, but brothers and sisters who rub shoulders with us on our Journey of Hope. We need to bring them, too, out of the shadows!"

Sister Jan Kilian, OSF, St. Cloud, MN

"I was privileged to be with a group of Franciscan Sisters and Associates of Little Falls, Minnesota who went to Texas to meet immigrants in the Rio Grande Valley in February 2017. Through the leadership of Ramona from A.R.I.S.E., an organization that helps new immigrants to help themselves, we heard dozens of personal stories. I urge our congress members to spend personal time with A.R.I.S.E. and the immigrants they work with along the McAllen, Texas border."