NETWORK

ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE, INSPIRED BY CATHOLIC SISTERS

NETWORK Lobby on a Solution for DACA Recipients

NETWORK believes that, as people of faith and a nation of many immigrants, we are called to love our neighbor and welcome the stranger. Immigrants and refugees are a vibrant part of the fabric of our society and positively contribute to our churches and our communities.

It's Time for Moral Leadership to Protect Dreamers

Almost 800,000 undocumented youth and young adults who are already part of the fabric of our society have had the opportunity to work, pursue their dreams, and contribute to their communities without fear of deportation since the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program began in 2012. With this legal status, DACA recipients have gained employment, pursued higher education, and started families. On September 5, 2017, the Trump administration announced its decision to terminate DACA and gave Congress until March 5 to find a solution. For months, immigrant families have lived in fear as members of Congress have failed to provide a solution. With less than 30 days until DACA is terminated, Congress must pass a bipartisan solution that provides a pathway to citizenship without threatening our values of family unity and the dignity of all people. The time for action is now!

Our Values:

- Catholic Social Justice teaches us that every person belongs to a single and interconnected human family.
- Undocumented people are our neighbors; we need to offer pathways to citizenship and work to keep families together and safe.
- Family based immigration is the cornerstone of our system and must be valued and protected.
- Scripture tells us that we too were once strangers in a strange land and so, we must love migrants and refugees as ourselves.

Dreamer Fast Facts

80%: Number of DACA recipients who arrived in the U.S. when they were 10 years old or younger.[1]

$2 Billion: Amount of state and local tax dollars paid for by DACA-eligible immigrants.[2]

787,580: Number of young undocumented individuals received DACA, which provided them temporary relief from deportation and employment opportunities.[3]

The Reality of Access to Citizenship

Our current immigration system is outdated, backlogged, and needs to be modernized. Because of this, the lives of millions of families hang in the balance. We believe every family deserves stability and security and that children should not have to live with the fear that their parents will be taken from them at any moment. **But, the immediacy of the looming March 5 deadline means Congress must prioritize a solution for DACA recipients now, and address comprehensive reform later.**

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"We, the people of this continent, are not fearful of foreigners,
because most of us were once foreigners."
– Pope Francis, Address to Congress, September 2015

Federal Policies Must Mend Gaps, Not Widen Them

NETWORK strongly supports the Dream Act (S. 1615/H.R. 3440), which would protect Dreamers from deportation and provide a clean path to citizenship for immigrant youth. We have encouraged Congress to pass such legislation for more than a decade. Alternatively, **we support the USA Act (S. 2367/H.R. 4796)** championed by Senator McCain and Senator Coons and Representative Hurd (TX-23) and Representative Aguilar (CA-31) is a positive, bipartisan, bicameral compromise. We appreciate that the border provisions included in the USA Act aspire to be data-driven, accountable, uphold the rule of law, and recognize the importance of consultation with border communities.

What Congress Can Do to Provide a Solution for DACA Recipients

NETWORK opposes the Trump Administration's Four Pillars because they are fundamentally anti-family. Instead, we urge Congress to support a legislative solution for DACA that will:

Include a path to citizenship: DACA recipients are young people who entered the U.S. as children and know the United States as their only home. They complied with our government in good faith – coming forward and providing personal information, submitting to a background check, and paying a biennial fee. They are positively contributing to our communities and the economy, and anything less than the opportunity for citizenship would be unjust.

Respect civil and human rights of border communities: NETWORK believe increased border enforcement or collaboration between local, tribal, and state law enforcement with Customs and Border Protection will not make our border communities safer, especially without increased accountability and oversight. We urge Congress to reject further militarization of the border, oppose border enforcement policies that violate human and civil rights, and affirm policies that include strong oversight and accountability mechanisms.

Protect family unity: NETWORK opposes any proposals to eliminate family based migration categories. We believe that green card programs must remain accessible to family members consistent with federal law. We must work to remedy existing prolonged family separation that is already pervasive rather than permanently preventing families from reuniting in the United States. We reject any attempt to redefine the nuclear family because we know siblings, adult children, and adult parents are all critical members of a family. Members of Congress should champion efforts to recognize, support, and protect family unity in every avenue of the immigration system.

Safeguard current avenues for legal immigration: It is fundamentally unjust to provide preferential treatment to immigrants based on wealth and privilege at the expense of family unification. Policies that would significantly reduce the number of immigrants welcomed into our country fail to recognize the economic and social contributions that all immigrants make to our country, regardless of their race, faith, country of origin, gender, skills, or education.

Defend asylum: We cannot close our doors or turn our backs on individuals fleeing violence or persecution. NETWORK opposes policies that would force asylum seekers to be turned back into the hands of traffickers, gangs, and others who seek to exploit them.

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1. "State & Local Contributions of Young Undocumented Immigrants." *Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.* April 2017. https://itep.org/wp-content/uploads/2017DACA.pdf
2. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Process.* Data as of March 31, 2017. https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-studies/immigration-forms-data/data-set-form-i-821d-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals
3. Witherspoon, Andrew. "Dreamers, by the Numbers" *Axios.* September 5, 2017. https://www.axios.com/dreamers-by-the-numbers-1513305283-f51c3dbe-8db5-4055-aa99-54cc473a9611.html

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