



January 18, 2017

President-Elect Donald J. Trump
Trump Tower
725 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear President-Elect Trump:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the undersigned organizations, we write regarding the Obama administration's executive action on "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals" ("DACA"). As you prepare to take office on January 20, we strongly urge you to keep the DACA program in place, so that Congress has a reasonable opportunity to adopt legislation to address this pressing human rights issue. Ending DACA – or worse, moving to deport any DACA recipients, also known as "Dreamers" – would do a grave injustice to hundreds of thousands of young immigrants raised in America, would undermine our economy, and would diminish our moral standing as a nation.

The DACA program, first announced in June 2012, provides a measure of common sense and compassion to immigrants who were brought to this country as children, have grown up here, and cannot rationally be blamed for their lack of legal immigration status. Since the program was first announced in 2012, approximately 750,000ⁱ young adults who grew up in this country have registered with the federal government, submitted to background checks, paid fees, and have worked to obtain an education. In return, DACA recipients are granted a two-year reprieve from the threat of deportation, work authorization, and the ability to move on with their lives – making valuable contributions to the communities in which they live, to the businesses that rely on their skills and their willingness to work hard, and to our economy and social fabric as a whole. Many have gone on to raise families of their own, and a number of them have even volunteered to serve in our military. Simply put, DACA recipients are among the most sympathetic and compelling cases that exist under our immigration system today.

If you choose to move forward on your pledge to end this program, the disruption to these 750,000 lives, and to the people close to them, including lawful permanent residents and U.S. citizens, will be swift and severe. And because DACA also provides work authorization, its repeal would also cause significant upheaval to businesses that have grown to rely on the work of Dreamers, and the communities that benefit from their contributions.

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Anti-Discrimination Committee
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AAJC
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National Council of La Raza
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National Partnership for
Women & Families
Terry O'Neill
National Organization for Women
Rabbi Jonah Pesner
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Of Reform Judaism
Anthony Romero
American Civil Liberties Union
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William Yoshino
Japanese American Citizens League

Policy and Enforcement

Committee Chair

Michael Lieberman
Anti-Defamation League

President & CEO

Wade J. Henderson
Executive Vice President & COO
Karen McGill Lawson

Any move to deport Dreamers would be even worse. It is beyond question that the American public supports reasonable and fair immigration reforms, ones that include putting unauthorized immigrants on a path to citizenship – and this public would be deeply troubled by a decision to expel immigrants who, having arrived as minor children, have acted fully consistently with the best of American values and who are, for all intents and purposes, American. Induced by the Department of Homeland Security’s promise not to use their information for enforcement purposes except for in very limited circumstances, DACA recipients submitted their personal information to that agency. It would be particularly inhumane for your administration to change that policy and use the information provided by DACA applicants in good faith against them or their families for enforcement purposes. It would also undermine the public’s faith in our government. Needless to say, the impact of DACA deportations on families, employers, and communities would also be profound, and would diminish our values as a nation.

As such, your pledge to end the DACA program presents a tremendous policy, political, and moral dilemma. There is, however, a very reasonable intermediate solution. A bipartisan group of Senators and Members of the House of Representatives have introduced the “BRIDGE Act,” which would provide Dreamers with a temporary reprieve from deportation on terms similar to DACA, but with the explicit backing of Congress. While we have strong moral reservations about legislation that does not provide Dreamers with a path to citizenship, and though the BRIDGE Act is no substitute for the comprehensive immigration reform our country needs, something must be done quickly to assuage the fear and anxiety of DACA recipients. The BRIDGE Act merits your unconditional support and we hope you will work with Congress to see it swiftly enacted into law and will maintain DACA until such a legislative solution can be reached and implemented.

Thank you for considering our request on this vital human rights matter. If you have any questions, please contact Wade Henderson, President & CEO of The Leadership Conference, at (202) 466-3311.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
9to5, National Association of Working Women
Philip Randolph Institute
Alliance for Citizenship
Alliance For Justice
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
American Association of University Women
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
American Jewish Committee (AJC)
American Psychological Association
America's Voice Education Fund

Anti-Defamation League
Arab American Institute
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO (APALA)
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
The Center for Law and Social Policy
Center for Reproductive Rights
Children's Defense Fund
Civil Rights Project
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
Coalition on Human Needs
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Democrats for Education Reform
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Disability Rights International
Dream Action Coalition (DRM)
Earthjustice
The Education Trust
Equal Rights Advocates
Family Equality Council
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Forward Together
Futures Without Violence
Global Justice Institute
Hindu American Foundation
Hispanic National Bar Association
Human Rights Campaign
Human Rights Watch
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Immigration Equality Action Fund
International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA)
International Association of Women in Radio and Television USA, INC. (IAWRT)
Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Justice and Witness Ministry of the United Church of Christ
Justice Policy Institute
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Latino Commission on AIDS
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
League of Women Voters of the United States
League of United Latin American Citizens

Marianist Social Justice Collaborative Steering Committee
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
Metropolitan Community Churches
NAACP
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
NAFSA: Association of International Educators
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Association for Bilingual Education
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
National Council of Churches
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Health Law Program (NHeLP)
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Immigration Law Center
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National LGBTQ Task Force
National Network for Arab American Communities
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates
Oxfam America
People For the American Way
PFLAG National
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
PolicyLink
Self-Help Credit Union
Service Employees International Union
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
Sisters of Charity, BVM
Sister of Mercy of the Americas
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southern Poverty Law Center



The Stuart Center for Mission, Educational Leadership and Technology
The United Church of Christ
United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW)
Transcend Legal
Union for Reform Judaism
Voices for Progress
Voto Latino
Witness to Mass Incarceration
Woodhull Freedom Foundation
YWCA USA

ⁱ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Data Set: Form I-821D Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, at <http://bit.ly/2bhRSdj>.