

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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30 Racial, Economic Justice Organizations: Congress Must Protect Dreamers

*Nationwide collection of state-based legal advocacy groups
stand with immigrant families and communities*

Chicago, IL — 30 members of [the Legal Impact Network](#) (LIN)—a nationwide collaboration of law and policy organizations that work in close partnership with immigrant and other communities to advance justice and opportunity for all—strongly urged Congress to pass legislation protecting DACA youth today.

Joining numerous legal, faith, business, education, and civic voices throughout the country, the LIN members, listed below, expressed support for the nearly 800,000 young immigrant Americans affected by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. These young people, commonly known as “Dreamers,” are under threat after the President’s September announcement that he would end DACA on March 5, 2018.

Dreamers have greatly contributed to their communities and the United States more broadly. Ending DACA will harm the entire country and impose tremendous hardship on young people who would face either deportation to countries that are not their home or a tenuous life in the shadows here in America. DACA recipients and their families are already facing the harsh consequences: thousands have lost their protected status and been stripped of educational and employment opportunities, while hundreds of thousands of others experience more and more uncertainty every day that Congress does not act.

LIN members urged Congress to quickly pass the DREAM Act of 2017—legislation currently pending in both [the House](#) and [the Senate](#) that will provide DACA recipients and other similar young people who were brought to the United States as children the certainty of legal status, and eventually, a way to earn citizenship.

LIN members were clear that the bill should be free of any “poison pill” provisions that would narrowly benefit young people, while threatening their families and communities with expanded immigration enforcement. They also emphasized that a legislative vehicle should not tie the fate of 800,000 young people to border militarization and other anti-immigrant spending projects.

Statements from advocates and experts from around the country are listed below.

“DACA has been an extremely successful initiative that has given a measure of stability and protection to young Americans who grew up in our communities and have deep family, social, and economic ties to our country,” said **Omaid Zabih**, a staff attorney with **Nebraska Appleseed**. “Congress must act now to allow these young people to keep contributing to their communities while being united with their families in the only place they know as home.”





“It is critical that our nation does not fail the 800,000 people who arrived in this country as children, and have grown up as our neighbors, our classmates, and our co-workers,” said **Kate Woome-Deters**, attorney with the **North Carolina Justice Center**. “It is equally critical that any bill passed to benefit the Dreamers does not use them as bargaining chips, proposing harsher conditions for other immigrants while providing narrow benefits to this group.”

Leah Engle, Program Director of the Maxwell Street Legal Clinic at **Kentucky Equal Justice Center**: “DACA has helped young people and their families across the country, including 6,000 in Kentucky. We've helped over 200 DACA recipients apply and re-apply for protection. We've seen the difference DACA makes for school, work and families. It's important that they continue to be protected and are able to remain in their communities through the passage of a clean DREAM Act.”

“Congress owes it to our communities, to Illinois, and to our country to provide relief for the almost 100,000 DACA-eligible people living in our state,” said **Kevin Herrera**, Staff Attorney at the **Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law**. “However, any legislation aimed at helping DACA recipients must not use their basic security as a bargaining chip for attacks on their families and communities. We reject all efforts to tie DACA legislation to increased funding for immigration enforcement, militarization of the border, or the construction of a border wall.”

From **South Carolina Appleseed** attorney **Tammy Beshere**: “For the almost 7,000 DACA recipients in South Carolina, the decision to end the incredibly effective DACA program has come as a shock, but DACA recipients are not the only ones directly affected by this decision. Folks across South Carolina are deeply concerned about this issue, because Dreamers are their friends, students, church members, employees, and classmates. Those connections are at the core of what it means to be American and make this a deeply personal issue. That is why now is the time to see a clean DREAM Act passed—because it is the right thing for South Carolina and the nation as a whole.”

Iris Gomez, attorney and Director of the Immigrants Protection Project at **Massachusetts Law Reform Institute**, added: “Dreamers, including DACA beneficiaries, play a positive, energizing role in so many of our communities in Massachusetts and elsewhere. They've become engineers, lawyers, college leaders, entrepreneurs. They've contributed to countless community service activities benefiting others and giving back to people around them. These young people model a spirit of resilience that inspires all our youth, regardless of where they may have been born.”

Joanne Lewis, managing attorney of **Connecticut Legal Services**: “Failure to enact provisions to protect DACA youth would be extremely short sighted, and will have economic consequences some of our leaders have ignored. DACA has allowed thousands of people to take their place in the mainstream of our society. They have careers, families and mortgages. Removing their ability to work legally will harm not only their families, but also their employers and other institutions such as banks, where loans will be virtually impossible to repay as DACA work authorizations expire.”





“For over 28,700 DACA recipients in Washington State, the end of the DACA program would result in the loss of their employment, their health insurance, and their ability to put the education they have earned to good use,” said **Diana Garcia**, staff attorney at **Columbia Legal Services in Washington**. “The United States is home to all of these members of our community, they should be allowed to fully live their lives here.”

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Center for Civil Justice (Michigan)
Colorado Center on Law and Poverty
Columbia Legal Services (Washington State)
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Hawaii Appleseed
Kansas Appleseed
Kentucky Equal Justice Center
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About the Legal Impact Network

The Legal Impact Network (LIN) is a dynamic collaborative of advocacy organizations from across the country working with communities to end poverty and achieve racial justice at the federal, state, and local levels. Network





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members currently include 35 organizations from 33 states and the District of Columbia. Learn more:
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