



Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Action Hour

December 5, 2022

What is Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)?

- DACA is a program that gives protection to Dreamers, certain young people who entered the U.S. without authorization as children.
- It was implemented by a directive from the DHS secretary on June 15, 2012.
- It provides them protection from deportation and allows them to apply for a driver's license, social security number, and work permit.
- DACA is temporary. The initial DACA status was for two years and can be renewed every two years. **There is *no* path to permanent status.**

Those individuals who currently have DACA, satisfy the following conditions:

- that they came to the U.S. before age 16;
- that they have resided here continuously since June 15, 2007;
- that they do not currently have legal immigration status;
- that they were present in the U.S. on June 15, 2012;
- that they were under the age of 31 on June 15, 2012;
- that they are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a GED certificate, or that they have been honorably discharged from the military;
- that they have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

The future of DACA is uncertain

- On July 16, 2021, a U.S. District Judge ruled that DACA is “illegal” and enjoined DHS from approving new applications. The judge temporarily stayed the portion of his decision that would halt DACA protections for current recipients.
- On October 5th, 2022, a federal appeals court agreed with this ruling and sent the case back to the District Court for further review and a decision.
- It appears that DACA’s days are numbered. Congress must act if DACA recipients and DACA eligible individuals are to be protected from deportation.

DACA Statistics

- Only about 653,000 Dreamers are currently protected under DACA.
- The average DACA recipient came to the U.S. at age 7 and has lived here for more than 20 years.
- At the peak participation, about 825,000 Dreamers were protected.
- DACA recipients are parents to about 300,000 U.S. citizen children.
- DACA recipients contribute to the economy and hold essential jobs.
- Because not all Dreamers applied for DACA and others aged into the program after it was no longer accepting new applicants, there are currently about 3.6 million Dreamers in the U.S.

We need a permanent solution for Dreamers

- DACA clearly is not permanent and is at risk.
- In the near term, the federal courts may decide that DACA is illegal.
- In the longer term, a future administration could end DACA.
- More than 1.3 million people live with a DACA recipient, including more than 300,000 U.S.-citizen children who have at least one parent with DACA.
- About 500,000 DACA-eligible students who turned 17 in 2017 or later cannot get a work permit, and therefore, cannot get a job.
- Nearly 98,000 additional undocumented students graduate high school each year.

Our Country Needs the Dreamers

- Each year DACA recipient households pay \$6.2 billion in federal taxes, \$3.3 billion in state and local taxes, and, after taxes, have \$25.3 billion in spending power.
- Nearly 80% of DACA recipients are employed and about half of those are in jobs deemed essential, including healthcare, education and childcare, and food production and processing.
- There is currently a need for thousands of additional workers in these essential jobs, and the army missed its recruiting goals by 25% this past fiscal year.
- Granting Dreamers legal status could help alleviate these shortages.

Congress must act now!

- Power in the 118th Congress will be shared between Democrats and Republicans.
- There is likely to be little immigration related legislation passed during the next two years.
- The current “lame duck” session of Congress offers the best opportunity for the passage of a few limited immigration related bills.
- A recent Pew Research Center poll shows 74% of Americans favor a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. and children.

Review of a Suggested Message for the Calls

Hello, I'm calling as a volunteer for Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice to ask the Senator to support Dreamers, immigrants brought to this country as children, who have had no other home. Legislation to protect these people needs to be enacted this year before courts end their temporary protection! [**If a resident add: I'm a constituent, living in (town).**] The thousands of Dreamers need a clear path to safety before their temporary status ends.

Dreamers have lived here for decades, started families, careers, and businesses, and provided essential services in communities across the land. The overwhelming majority of Americans support providing a pathway to full citizenship to these Dreamers.

The legal circumstances require Congressional action now.

[**If speaking to a live person: Do you know how the Senator plans to vote?**]

Optional: Go further, if leaving a message or the person allows:

- My faith/values, lead me to believe these Dreamers are our neighbors and deserve our help.
- They not only provide important services and economic benefits in our communities, but they could also help our military meet its difficult recruiting targets.
- I trust the Senator will help America honor its moral obligations and let Dreamers build our economic strength.