



Testimony for the Record

Presented to the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary

“Oversight of the Administration’s Decision to End the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program”

October 3, 2017

Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Feinstein, and Members of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, we thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony regarding the hearing on the Administration’s decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) is a national, nonpartisan, anti-poverty organization advancing federal, state, and local policy solutions that work for low-income people. We are extremely concerned with the devastating impact that the Administration’s decision to end DACA has had on the more than 800,000 young people who have benefitted from the program as well as their families and communities. We urge Congress to act quickly to pass clean bipartisan legislation like the Dream Act of 2017 that will help provide DACA recipients and other undocumented youth with a clear attainable path to citizenship.

The Administration’s decision to end DACA came after months of mixed messages, creating immediate harm for DACA recipients across the country. Termination of DACA is expected to undermine the economic security and overall wellbeing of DACA recipients and their families as well as weaken our country’s economic vitality. The decision to stop accepting new DACA applications on September 5 means that more than 200,000 young Dreamers who were waiting to turn 15 to meet the program’s age requirements are also now precluded from DACA’s protections, dashing their hopes for a better future.¹ In addition, the process the Administration has put in place to end the program includes arbitrary deadlines and restrictions that create additional hardships for DACA beneficiaries, many of whom are students, employees, and parents.

Impact on current DACA beneficiaries

DACA recipients live in all 50 states and immigrated to the U.S. before turning 16 (on average, when they were just six years old).² Today, they are 25 years old on average.³ These young people have been students and contributing members of our society for at least a decade. When their DACA status expires, recipients will be unable to work legally and will once again be at risk of deportation. In addition to job loss, DACA recipients will lose their employer-based health insurance and in some states their eligibility for public, state-funded health coverage.⁴ Depending on the state where DACA recipients live, they may also face challenges in renewing their driver’s license and may no longer be eligible for in-state college tuition. Finally, the constant uncertainty and fear of being forced into the shadows has and will continue to undermine their mental health and wellbeing. In fact, Dreamers reported that receiving DACA gave them hope for the future, instilled a greater sense of belonging and value, and reduced their fear of authorities.⁵ The decision to end the program has once again unraveled these feelings of security.

The DACA rescission process that spans a period of 6 months, including the October 5 deadline for those eligible for renewal prior to March 5, is incredibly burdensome for DACA beneficiaries. An estimated 154,000 beneficiaries are eligible for a one-time renewal if they are able to submit their paperwork as

well as the \$495 associated fee by October 5. The administration's one month timeline for renewal applications is onerous and particularly devastating to beneficiaries living in states recently impacted by major hurricanes. The remaining 75 percent of DACA beneficiaries will not be able to renew their DACA status, meaning approximately 1,400 Dreamers will lose their DACA benefits each day starting on March 6.⁶

Impact on family members of DACA recipients, including U.S. citizen children

Many DACA recipients live in mixed-status families and are financially supporting their family members, while an estimated 34 percent of immediately eligible DACA recipients live in families with annual incomes below the federal poverty line.⁷ In fact, DACA recipients are often their families' primary breadwinners. Research shows that DACA has significantly improved economic outcomes for recipients. Through DACA, recipients have increased their incomes by 69 percent, enabling them to purchase cars and homes as well as climb out of poverty.⁸

Furthermore, it's estimated that more than quarter of DACA recipients have a child who is a U.S. citizen.⁹ Research shows that children benefit when their parents are mentally and physically healthy and have access to higher education and better-quality jobs. Indeed, one study found that mothers' DACA status promoted improved mental health for their children.¹⁰ Ending DACA will have the opposite effect, severely undermining children's development and wellbeing. Families will be forced to live in fear of being separated due to deportation as well as experience stress over financial hardships—all of which put children's healthy development at risk.

Impact on the economy and community

DACA recipients are integral members of our nation's community and economy. A large share of DACA recipients are students in our nation's secondary and postsecondary institutions, while all beneficiaries are contributing members of our economy. In fact, 97 percent of DACA beneficiaries are either in school or working, catalyzing a strong response from business leaders and institutions of higher education across the country calling for the Trump Administration and Congress to protect Dreamers.¹¹ Removing students, teachers, doctors, business owners, and other young immigrants will ravage their communities as well as the national economy. It is estimated that ending DACA will reduce the U.S. Gross Domestic Product by \$460 billion over the next decade.¹²

CLASP urges passage of the Dream Act of 2017

Given DACA's looming termination and the immediate harm already caused by the reckless decision to terminate the program, it's imperative that Congress act quickly to pass legislation providing a permanent solution for DACA beneficiaries as well as other undocumented youth. Among all the bills in Congress, the Dream Act of 2017 is the only bipartisan proposal that would provide a clear pathway to citizenship to a wide range of DACA recipients and other Dreamers who satisfy the bill's higher education, military, or employment requirements. This would enable young people who are *working* to also qualify for a path to citizenship. In addition, the Dream Act includes a hardship exception for Dreamers who may not be able to work, attend school, or join the military due to certain circumstances, such as raising children. Consequently, the Dream Act of 2017 reflects the full diversity and talents of the undocumented youth population, including those who have not pursued a traditional college education or military service. A recent analysis shows that 1.5 million young people could potentially complete the Dream Act's path to citizenship, compared to 938,000 under proposals like the Recognizing America's Children (RAC) Act.¹³ CLASP recently spearheaded a letter calling for passage of the Dream Act that was signed by 320 other child and youth advocacy organizations across the country.

As an organization committed to ensuring that policy solutions work for low-income people, CLASP is concerned with other legislative proposals like the SUCCEED Act. While the bill seeks to provide a solution for DACA recipients, it falls short on providing a realistic and workable solution for the undocumented youth population. In addition to severe due process concerns and an exceptionally long path to citizenship, the SUCCEED Act would exclude many undocumented youth, including those who are current beneficiaries of the DACA program. For example, the bill includes overly restrictive requirements on date of entry and age that would once again leave out hundreds of thousands of young people who aged out of the 2012 DACA program and previous legislative proposals. The bill also includes unrealistic requirements that put potential beneficiaries at greater risk of falling out of status and bar them from obtaining citizenship. For example, the bill would deny potential beneficiaries from qualifying for an additional 5 year period of conditional status should they use supports like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) or American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC), which are critical for working families and low-income students. The bill also penalizes beneficiaries if they encounter hard times and may need health or nutrition assistance at some point on their 15-year path to citizenship and fails to create hardship exceptions for young parents, potentially leaving out more than 200,000 DACA recipients who are raising young U.S. citizen children.

Finally, we urge Congress to pass legislation that is free from harmful enforcement provisions that could undermine the safety and well-being of immigrant youth and families. CLASP has been conducting research over the past year to better understand how new immigration policies are impacting young children in immigrant families. Our interviews with child care and early education providers and focus groups with parents reveal that increased enforcement actions and anti-immigrant rhetoric have resulted in heightened stress among parents, children and service providers. In addition to increased parental anxiety which is transferred to children, immigrant parents are also more reluctant to enroll their children in critical health and nutrition programs for fear of perceived immigration-related repercussions, despite their being eligible. It is clear that any legislative fix for undocumented youth that is coupled with enforcement provisions will result in additional harm for these young adults and their families.

We thank you again for the opportunity to submit this written testimony, and we look forward to working with you to pass a clean legislative solution that will fairly address the urgent situation facing hundreds of thousands of Dreamers across the country. Should you have any questions regarding this testimony, please do not hesitate to reach Wendy Cervantes, CLASP's Senior Policy Analyst for Immigration and Immigrant Families, at wcervantes@clasp.org or 202-906-8059.

ENCLOSED: September 20, 2017 Dream Act letter from 321 children and youth advocacy organizations

Endnotes

¹ Faye Hipsman, Barbara Gomez-Aguinaga, and Randy Capps. "DACA at Four: Participation in the Deferred Action Program and Impacted on Recipients. The Migration Policy Institute, August 2016.

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<http://www.iwj.org/resources/state-by-state-daca-fact-sheets>

³ Tom Wong, United We Dream, the National Immigration Law Center, and the Center for American Progress, *Results from Tom K. Wong et al., 2017 National DACA Study*, Center for American Progress, August 2017.

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⁵ Roberto G. Gonzales and Kristina Brant, "Analysis: DACA Boosts Young Immigrants' Well-Being, Mental Health," NBC News, June 15, 2017. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/analysis-daca-boosts-young-immigrants-well-being-mental-health-n772431>

⁶ Center for American Progress and FWD.us, *Study: The Impact of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program Repeal on Jobs*, FWD.us, August 2017. <https://dreamers.fwd.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/20170823-DACA-Job-Loss-Report.pdf>

⁷ Zenén Jaimes Pérez, *A Portrait of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Recipients*, United We Dream, October 2015. <http://unitedwedream.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/DACA-report-final-1.pdf>

⁸ Tom K. Wong, Greisa Martinez Rosas, Adam Luna, Henry Manning, Adrian Reyna, Patrick O'Shea, Tom Jawetz, and Philip E. Wolgin, "DACA Recipients' Economic and Educational Gains Continue to Grow," Center for American Progress, August 28, 2017.

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⁹ Tom Wong et al., *Results from Tom K. Wong et al., 2017 National DACA Study*.

¹⁰ Jens Hainmueller, Duncan Lawrence, Linna Martén, et al. *Protecting unauthorized immigrant mothers improves their children's mental health*, Science Magazine, August 2017.

<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/sci/early/2017/08/30/science.aan5893.full.pdf>

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<https://www.businessleadersdreamletter.com/>

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¹² Nicole Prchal Svajlenka, Tom Jawetz, and Angie Bautista-Chavez, "A New Threat to DACA Could Cost States Billions of Dollars," Center for American Progress, July 21, 2017.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2017/07/21/436419/new-threat-daca-cost-states-billions-dollars/>

¹³ Jeanne Batalova, Ariel G. Ruiz Soto, and Michelle Mittelstadt, *Protecting the DREAM: The Potential Impact of Different Legislative Scenarios for Unauthorized Youth*, Migration Policy Institute, July 2017.

<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/protecting-dream-potential-impact-different-legislative-scenarios-unauthorized-youth>

September 20, 2017

Dear Member of Congress,

The undersigned organizations are writing to express our strong support for the immediate passage of the bipartisan [Dream Act of 2017](#) (S.1615/H.R. 3440), which would provide lawful status and a clear path to citizenship to certain immigrant youth and young adults who came to the United States as children, including recipients of the [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#) (DACA) program. As organizations concerned with the emotional, psychological, physical, educational, and economic wellbeing of children and youth, we are united in our commitment to ensuring that all children in the United States have opportunities for educational and economic success.

Swift Congressional action on the Dream Act is imperative following President Trump's decision to terminate DACA, an action that will uproot the lives of more than [800,000](#) Dreamers who have been able to access work authorization and protection from deportation through the program. DACA has proven to be smart policy—not only for DACA recipients but also for their families and communities. A large [survey](#) of DACA recipients found that 45 percent of DACA youth are enrolled in school and more than 90 percent are employed.

The decision to end DACA will have negative consequences for children and youth across the United States. It immediately caused upheaval for almost a million young immigrants, who are once again worried about their safety and security in the only country they call home. Dreamers [report](#) that receiving DACA gave them hope for the future, instilled a greater sense of belonging and value, and reduced their fear of authorities. Being forced back into the shadows will significantly [undermine their mental health](#) and wellbeing. Furthermore, Dreamers are forced to worry about how they will continue to support their families and fund their education without the ability to work.

Ending the program also undercuts the wellbeing of families who depend on DACA recipients, including U.S. citizen children. Roughly a quarter of DACA recipients are parents to U.S. citizen children. Decades of developmental research tells us that children markedly benefit when their parents are mentally and physically healthy and have access to higher education and quality jobs. Moreover, an emerging body of research exposes the developmental harm that children experience when parents lack [status](#). In addition to the negative effects of financial hardship during childhood, children experience tremendous [fear and stress](#) at the prospect of being separated from their parents.

Finally, the termination of DACA dashes the hopes of approximately [200,000 little Dreamers](#) who have been waiting to turn 15 to meet the program's age requirements. Like citizen children, they have and will continue to spend the majority of their young lives learning and growing in our schools and communities. Without Congressional action, their dreams of becoming our nation's future lawyers, doctors, teachers, soldiers, scientists, and policymakers will be cut short.

As organizations dedicated to the health and wellbeing of children, we submit that the bipartisan Dream Act is common-sense legislation to provide a permanent solution for DACA recipients as well as other eligible immigrant youth. The bill reflects the diverse talents and passions of the Dreamer population, including those who are parents. Advancing educational and employment opportunities for millions of children and youth supports their wellbeing and future success as well as that of our country. We urge members of Congress to act quickly and pass a clean Dream Act.

Signatories

National Organizations

Advocates for Youth
Alliance for Early Success
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Dance Therapy Association
American Federation of Teachers
American Psychological Association
BUILD Initiative
Building Movement Project
Campaign for Youth Justice
Center for American Progress
Center for Immigration and Child Welfare
Center for Law and Social Policy
Center for Public Interest Law
Center for Rural Affairs
Child Care Aware of America
Child Labor Coalition
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Advocacy Institute
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Defense Fund Southern Regional Office
Children's Leadership Council
Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Coalition on Human Needs
College Success Foundation
Community Catalyst
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Courage Campaign
Democrats for Education Reform
Educare Learning Network
Family Focused Treatment Association
First Focus Campaign for Children
Forum for Youth Investment
Gateway to College National Network
Generations United
Girls Inc.

Heartland Alliance
HighScope Educational Research Foundation
iMentor
Immigration Partnership and Coalition Fund
Jobs for the Future
Justice in Motion
Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
Learning Disabilities Association of America
LIFT
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Make it Work
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
MomsRising
National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association for Family Child Care
National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
National Center for Youth Law
National College Access Network
National Consumers League
National Council of Young Leaders
National Crittenton Foundation
National Education Association
National Health Law Program
National Human Services Assembly
National Immigration Law Center
National Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Association
National Network for Youth
National Women's Law Center
National Youth Employment Coalition
New Horizon Academy
New Leaders
Nonprofit Leadership Alliance
Opportunity Nation
Opportunity Youth United
Ounce of Prevention Fund
Pacific Northwest Association for College Admission Counseling (PNACAC)
Partnership for America's Children
PCACAC Government Relations Committee

People's Action
Pre-Health Dreamers
ProInspire
Public Advocacy for Kids
Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
School Social Work Association of America
SchoolHouse Connection
SCORE
Southern Association for College Admission Counseling
Southern Center for Human Rights
SparkAction
Stand for Children
StandUp For Kids
The Advocates for Human Rights
The Children's Partnership
Think of Us
True Colors Fund
UNICEF USA
UnidosUS
United We Dream
We Belong Together
Women's Refugee Commission
Year Up
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights
Young Invincibles
YouthBuild USA, Inc.
YWCA USA
ZERO TO THREE

State and Local Organizations

Alabama

Alabama Possible
Alabama Family Child Care Association
Girls Inc. of Central Alabama
Madison County Home Child Care Association
Voices for Alabama's Children

Alaska

Alaska Children's Trust

Arizona

Arizona Council of Human Service Providers
Children's Action Alliance
Phoenix Youth & Family Services, Inc.

Arkansas

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

California

Advokids
American Sports Institute
Association for California School Administrators
California Alternative Payment Program Association
California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAAEYC)
Child Care Law Center
Children's Defense Fund—California
Children's Law Center of California
Children Now
Clinica Monseñor Oscar A. Romero
Coalition of Orange County Community Health Centers
Community Clinic Consortium of Contra Costa and Solano
Community Health Councils
Community Health Partnership
Educare California at Silicon Valley
Equality California
Girls Inc. of Greater Los Angeles
Girls Inc. of San Diego County
Law Foundation of Silicon Valley
Northern California Association of Counsel for Children
Parent Voices CA
PDAP of Ventura County, Inc.
Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network
Southern CA Association for the Education of Young Children

Colorado

Clayton Early Learning
Colorado Children's Campaign
Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition
Denver Scholarship Foundation
Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network

Connecticut

All Our Kin
Center for Children's Advocacy, Inc.
Connecticut Association for Human Services
Connecticut Voices for Children
Our Piece of the Pie, Inc.
SEIU Connecticut State Council

Delaware

Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children

District of Columbia

District of Columbia Association of Secondary School Principals (DCASSP)
Girls Inc. DC
La Clinica del Pueblo

Florida

Catalyst Miami
Children's Forum
Girls Inc. of Bay County
Girls Inc. of Jacksonville
Girls Inc. of Winter Haven

Georgia

Columbia Presbyterian Church
Georgia Budget and Policy Institute
Interactive College of Technology
Los Vecinos de Buford Highway

Hawaii

Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children
Hawaii Association of Secondary School Administrators

Idaho

Idaho AEYC
Idaho Association of School Administrators

Illinois

Casa Central
Catholic Charities Diocese of Joliet

Center for the Human Rights of Children, Loyola University Chicago
Erikson Institute
Illinois Action for Children
Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling
Illinois Collaboration on Youth
Illinois Principals Association
Voices for Illinois Children

Indiana

Girls Inc. of Monroe County
Indiana Association of School Principals
Indiana Institute for Working Families

Iowa

Girls Inc. of Sioux City

Kansas

Kansas Action for Children

Kentucky

Family & Children's Place
Girls Inc. Owensboro

Louisiana

Louisiana Policy Institute for Children

Maine

Bonny Eagle High School
Maine Association for the Education of Young Children
Maine Children's Alliance
Maine Principals' Association

Maryland

Advocates for Children and Youth
Asylee Women Enterprise
Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals
Prince George's County Family Child Care Association
Professional Child Care Provider Network of Prince George's Co. Inc.
Ready At Five

Massachusetts

Girls Inc. of the Berkshires

Girls Inc. of Holyoke

Girls Inc. of the Seacoast Area

MAFAC

Massachusetts School Administrators Association

MIRA Coalition

Northeast Justice Center

Strategies for Children

Michigan

Michigan Association for College Admission Counseling

Michigan's Children

Mothering Justice

Priority Children

Minnesota

Children's Defense Fund—Minnesota

Minnesota Association for College Admission Counseling (MACAC)

MN Association for the Education of Young Children (MNAEYC) & MN School-Age Care

YWCA Minneapolis

Mississippi

Mississippi Low Income Child Care Initiative

Missouri

Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals

SLATE Missouri Job Center

Montana

Montana Association of County School Superintendents

Montana Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals

Montana Association of School Superintendents

Montana Association of Secondary School Principals

Montana Council of Administrators of Special Education

Montana Educational Technologists Association

School Administrators of Montana

Nebraska

ACLU of Nebraska

Black Men United

Compassion in Action, Inc.

Early Childhood Services

First Five Nebraska

Food Bank of Lincoln

Heartland Workers Center

Holland Children's Movement

Latino Center of the Midlands

Nebraska Appleseed

League of Women Voters of Greater Omaha

League of Women Voters of Lincoln and Lancaster County Nebraska

League of Women Voters of Nebraska

Nebraska Youth Advocates

OneWorld Community Health Centers

Unity in Action

Voices for Children in Nebraska

Nevada

Children's Advocacy Alliance

New Hampshire

Mont Vernon Village School

Woodman Park School

New Jersey

Advocates for Children of New Jersey

New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association

New Mexico

New Mexico Voices for Children

OLÉ

New York

Advocates for Children of New York

Atlas: DIY

Brothers At Bard

Center for Children's Initiative

Child Care Council of Suffolk, Inc.

Child Care Resource Network

Children's Defense Fund—New York
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
Early Care & Learning Council
Girls Inc. of Long Island
Lawyers For Children, Inc.
NYS Association for College Admissions Counseling (NYSACAC)
NYS Association for the Education of Young Children
Prevent Child Abuse New York
School Administrators Association of New York State
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation

North Carolina

NC Child
North Carolina Justice Center

Ohio

Action for Children
Children's Defense Fund—Ohio
HAPPY Homes Ohio Association
Ohio Association for College Admission Counseling
Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children
Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators
Southwest Ohio AEYC
YWCA of Hamilton

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Association of Secondary Principals
Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Association
Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy

Oregon

Children's Institute
Confederation of Oregon School Administrators
Oregon Association of Secondary School Administrators

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Principals Association
Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling
Public Citizens for Children and Youth

Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico Association for the Education of Young Children

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Association of School Principals

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

South Carolina

PASOs

Tennessee

Black Children's Institute of Tennessee

Community Legal Center

Tennessee Association of Secondary School Principals

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

Texas

Center for Public Policy Priorities

CHILDREN AT RISK

Children's Defense Fund—Texas

Children's Rights Clinic

CollegeCommunityCareer

Hispanic Faculty Staff Association of the University of Texas at Austin

Texas Association for College Admissions Counseling

Texans Care for Children

Voices for Children of San Antonio

Utah

Professional Family Child Care Association of Utah

Utah Association of Secondary School Principals

Vermont

Vermont Principals' Association

Virginia

Child Care Connections of Richmond

Virginia Alliance of Family Child Care Associations

Washington

Association of Washington School Principals

Northwest Health Advocates

Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP

West Virginia

West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy

Wisconsin

Association of WI School Administrators

CAP Services, Inc.

Center for Resilient Cities

East Madison Community Center

Girls Inc. of Greater Madison

Kids Forward

Wisconsin Association of College Admissions Counselors

Wyoming

Wyoming Association of Secondary School Principals