

Legislation Text

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Requesting the President of the United States and the United States Congress to enact legislation allowing Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program recipients to remain permanently in the United States by March 2018.

WHEREAS, In June 2012, President Barack Obama used an executive order to establish the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The program allowed individuals who were brought to the United States as minors and met several other conditions to defer deportation for a two-year period. DACA recipients could renew their deferred action status in two-year intervals. No individuals were granted lawful immigration status through DACA; and

WHEREAS, DACA recipients are often called DREAMers, in reference to the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act which was first introduced by Senator Orrin Hatch in August 2001 and has not been passed by Congress to date; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 800,000 undocumented individuals, now between the ages of 15 and 36, enrolled in DACA from June 2012 to September 2017. This includes about 900 DACA recipients currently serving in the United States military. DACA recipients share American values, attend American schools and higher education institutions, contribute to American communities, and strengthen the American economy. Philadelphia has benefited from being a home to DACA recipients, many of whom have no substantial ties to their parents' homelands; and

WHEREAS, On September 5, 2017, President Donald Trump announced that he would "begin an orderly transition and wind-down of DACA, one that provides minimum disruption." No new applications will be received for DACA, and all existing DACA recipients' work permits will be honored until their expiration date. This means that DACA recipients will lose their deferred status beginning in March 2018, and all will be technically eligible for deportation by March 2020; and

WHEREAS, President Trump has said that the six months between his announcement and the first expiration of DACA permits allows "a window of opportunity for Congress to finally act"; and

WHEREAS, Congress should expediently work in a bipartisan manner to enact legislation that will enable DACA recipients to remain permanently in the United States. Failure to do so would be to punish 800,000 innocent members of American society, upending families, communities, and businesses across the country; and

WHEREAS, Given the significant worry and uncertainty among DACA recipients relating to the announcement that DACA will be discontinued, the announcement of a process that assures DACA recipients that they will be able to remain in the United States with temporary legal status in case Congress fails to pass a more permanent legislative solution by March 2018 would be an important step towards stabilizing communities and local economies, including Philadelphia's; and

WHEREAS, For the sake of its families, communities, and businesses, the City of Philadelphia now depends on Congress to act urgently, compassionately, and decisively. The City will welcome standalone legislation adopted by March 2018 that provides a pathway to permanent residency for DACA recipients and ends the possibility of deportation from the only home many of them have ever known; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby request the President of the United States and the United States Congress to enact legislation allowing Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program recipients to remain permanently in the United States by March 2018.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States and to each member of Congress representing Philadelphia.