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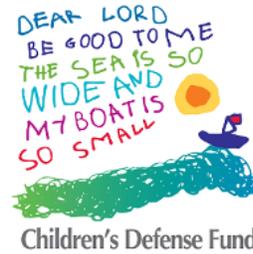
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Over 320 Child, Youth Organizations Call for Immediate Passage of Dream Act

Washington, D.C.—Today, more than 320 national, state, and local child and youth advocacy organizations sent [a letter](#) to Congress in support of the bipartisan [Dream Act of 2017](#). The bill would provide lawful status and a path to citizenship for hundreds of thousands of immigrant youth and young adults who came to the United States as children, including recipients of the [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#) (DACA) program.

The letter urges Congress to quickly pass a clean Dream Act that protects immigrant youth from the severe consequences of President Trump's decision to end DACA. Right now, more than [800,000](#) Dreamers who have been able to access work authorization and protection from deportation are once again facing an uncertain future.

"CLASP stands with immigrant youth and over 300 organizations in calling on Congress to quickly pass the Dream Act," said **Olivia Golden, executive director of CLASP**. "This is critical not only for Dreamers' wellbeing and success, but for that of their families, including hundreds of thousands of young children who have DACA parents. The Dream Act is common-sense legislation that will help ensure every child has the opportunity to realize their potential, which is key to our nation's future."

As organizations concerned with the health and wellbeing of children and youth, the signatories recognize that rescinding DACA will have immediate, severe consequences for recipients and their families. Recipients will lose their work authorization and once again be at risk for deportation, threatening their safety, economic security, and mental health—as well as that of their families. An estimated 25 percent of DACA recipients are parents to U.S. citizen children. The decision also means that more than 200,000 Dreamers under age 15 who were waiting to age into DACA no longer have the opportunity to apply.

"Our 66,000 pediatrician, pediatric medical subspecialist and pediatric surgical specialist members stand with the young immigrants facing an uncertain future by supporting passage of a clean Dream Act of 2017," said **Fernando Stein, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics**. "As they grew into

young adults, DACA recipients have served our country in uniform, they have graduated from our colleges and universities, they have invested in our communities and they work in our cities and towns. Our country is the only meaningful home these children—who are now young adults—have ever known. The Dream Act will allow them to remain here, where they belong.”

“The bipartisan Dream Act of 2017 will provide Dreamers—including our youngest Dreamers—educational and employment opportunities ripped away when the president ended DACA,” said **Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children’s Defense Fund**. “It will also provide an eventual path to citizenship for these young people, strengthening their futures and the future of our nation.”

“Dreamers deserve permanent legal status,” said **Bruce Lesley, president of First Focus Campaign for Children**. “For these young people, the United States is home, and now the termination of DACA has put their futures at risk. Many have no connection to the countries where they were born. The Dream Act would ensure that hardworking young people who arrived here as children are able to pursue their dreams and contribute to our nation’s prosperity.”

“In California, DACA provided over 220,000 immigrant youth a pathway to achieve their dreams. Rescinding the program has caused fear and panic—putting children and youth at higher risk of anxiety and depression and harming their healthy development,” said **Mayra E. Alvarez, president of The Children’s Partnership**. “As advocates for children, we understand that this policy extends far beyond its intended recipients. If DACA parents are detained, deported, and/or unable to work legally, their children could lose housing, struggle to get food, and fall into poverty. The American values of hard work and fairness are part of every family who calls this country home. We join our partners and urge leaders to put our nation’s values into action through passage of the Dream Act.”

“Our young people—and our country—are strongest when they embrace diversity. Our country needs to practice the same social-emotional skills that we teach our children and youth,” said **Karen Pittman, president and CEO of the Forum for Youth Investment**. “Dreamers embody empathy, teamwork, responsibility, initiative, problem solving, and love. Disrupting the lives of nearly one million DACA youth hurts us all. It undermines our moral, social, and economic values and teaches the wrong lessons to all our young people.”

The signatories are committed to ensuring that *all* children and youth in the U.S. have the opportunity to thrive. As stated in the letter, “the Dream Act of 2017 is bipartisan legislation that reflects the full diversity of the Dreamer population, including those who are parents, and will help ensure all eligible children and youth have the opportunity to pursue their educational and career goals.”

[Click here to read the letter.](#)