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June 14, 2021

The Hon. Richard Durbin  
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee  
152 Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Charles Grassley  
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee  
224 Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Anti-Defamation League, I write to share our strong support for the American Dream and Promise Act, and our recommendation that this Committee advance this critical legislation toward enactment.

The Anti-Defamation League was founded in 1913 to combat antisemitism and all forms of hatred and bigotry. Our advocacy efforts over the past century have consistently drawn inspiration from Jewish people's history and contemporary experiences of migration, often under duress. We have opposed and called upon our nation's leadership to avoid repeating those instances in which we failed to provide refuge to people fleeing danger – as when the U.S. refused to admit more than 900 Jewish refugees traveling on the SS St. Louis in 1939 – as well as the times when we betrayed our principles by injecting bias into the immigration system, or by relying on overly restrictive and unforgiving rules to turn away or deport qualified immigrants with strong ties to our country. ADL believes in inclusive policymaking that unites people from diverse backgrounds, and works to enact just and humanitarian immigration law.

These values compel us to endorse the American Dream and Promise Act and to call for swift adoption of pathways to citizenship for beneficiaries of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program and Temporary Protected Status designations. Both programs have been extremely successful in extending opportunity to deserving individuals who have built lives and livelihoods in the U.S., formed American families, and made the nation much more secure and prosperous than it would have been without their contributions.

Approximately 800,000 individuals who were brought to the U.S. as children – whose undocumented status was no fault of their own – have been granted deferred action since the Obama Administration instituted DACA in 2012. Their achievements, and those of other young immigrants not eligible for this protection, are notable: for example, as of 2017, an astounding 91 percent of DACA recipients were employed, and 45 percent were then in school, with 72 percent of those students pursuing a bachelor's or graduate degree. The enormous benefit that these individuals' presence among us imparts has been spotlighted during the pandemic. Experts estimate that around 200,000 DACA recipients are essential workers, and about 27,000 work in health care and have served on the front lines of the war against COVID-19.

Like DACA recipients, many beneficiaries of Temporary Protected Status have been integral and valued members of their communities in this country for decades. More than 400,000 people hold TPS today, according to estimates, and most are people who have resided in the U.S. since conflict rendered their countries of origin unsafe in 1999 and 2001. As is true of DACA beneficiaries, a strong majority of 88.5 percent of TPS holders are employed, according to a 2017 survey. Recipients of this protection from just three of the 12 nations whose citizens may be eligible – El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti – will contribute an estimated \$6.9 billion in social security and Medicare taxes on income to our public welfare over the course of a decade. TPS beneficiaries are also parents of more than 270,000 U.S. citizen children, to date.

In light of the many important roles that DACA and TPS recipients play in the lives of millions of family members, employers, employees, friends, neighbors, and other Americans who benefit from their presence, it is not surprising that overwhelming majorities support provisions like the American Dream and Promise Act, that would extend the opportunity to earn U.S. citizenship to these deserving individuals. For example, a February 2021 Morning Consult/Politico poll found that by a 60-24 percent margin, voters favored citizenship measures in immigration legislation, and in surveying conducted for FWD.us and America's Voice during the same time frame, respondents asked whether the law should offer a pathway to citizenship or require deportation of undocumented residents preferred citizenship by a 79-21 percent count.

While we appreciate and celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of our loved ones, friends, and neighbors who have benefitted from the DACA and TPS programs, ADL is extremely concerned that even after as much as decades of dedication to creating a life in this country and to enriching our economy, society, and culture, most DACA and TPS recipients have not been able to pursue U.S. citizenship and the stability and opportunity it provides. U.S. citizens enjoy an added confidence when founding a business, buying a house, or investing in building community institutions and relationships that people with only temporary authorization to live and work in our country do not. Their earnings are on average greater than those of non-citizens, therefore they contribute more to public coffers as well as to private commercial activity.

The permanent place in this country that so many could access with the passage of the American Dream and Promise Act would further empower a talented, industrious, and patriotic group of as many as 4 million beneficiaries to thrive, and in so doing, would serve the best interests of every American. Just as importantly, enactment of this legislation honors the convictions that animate ADL: we are called by Jewish tradition, and as beneficiaries ourselves of the opportunity that an open and democratic United States has given to so many, to embrace equally all of our neighbors with whom we share responsibility for our collective health, welfare, and defense; and to preserve the bonds of family and community through which we work and grow together.

Recipients of DACA and TPS protections, and others like them who would be eligible for permanent status pursuant to the American Dream and Promise Act, have waited far too long for the chance that we are so justifiably proud of extending to any other long-term immigrant resident of our country, to earn citizenship and the rights and responsibilities that come with it. ADL urges you not to delay any longer, and to advance this worthy legislation with the unanimous support it deserves.

Thank you for your consideration of the American Dream and Promise Act and these views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Sevilla', written over a horizontal line.

Max Sevilla

Vice President, Government Relations, Advocacy, and Community Engagement