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October 2, 2017

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Feinstein,

In advance of the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings on *Oversight of the Administration's Decision to End Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals* tomorrow, we write to provide the views of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and ask that this statement be included as part of the official hearings record.

Founded in 1913, for more than a century ADL has advocated for fair and just immigration policies. As a leading civil rights organization dedicated to combatting hatred, bigotry, and discrimination, ADL supports a pathway to citizenship for young undocumented immigrants brought to this country as children.

The Impact of President Trump's Repeal of DACA

On Tuesday, September 5th, President Trump rescinded Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a program created by President Obama in 2012 that granted work authorization and relief from deportation for a two-year period for certain undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children. Nearly 800,000 young people went to bed on September 5th unsure of their future and scared that they could soon face deportation to a country they may have never known.

Each of those 800,000 people is an individual with a unique story, but they have one thing in common: they were all brought to the United States as children without documentation, through no fault of their own. On average, DACA recipients were six and a half years old when they arrived in the United States.¹ Some who were brought as very young children only learned of their undocumented status years after their entry. Many have no memories of their country of birth and no connections there. They are American in all but their paperwork.

¹ Tom K. Wong, *2017 National DACA Study*, Center for American Progress (Aug. 2017), <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2017/08/27164928/Wong-Et-Al-New-DACA-Survey-2017-Codebook.pdf>.

ADL Community Support Center

Anti-Defamation League, 605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158-3560 T 212.885.7700 www.adl.org

DACA recipients have contributed greatly to our communities and our economy. DACA recipients, like their American classmates and neighbors, have been raised and educated in our communities. They have worked hard and stayed out of trouble.² For the last five years, DACA allowed these young people to go to college or graduate school, work, start businesses and buy homes. More than 90 percent of DACA recipients are employed and paying taxes, and almost half are pursuing higher education.³ They came out of the shadows and went through the extensive and expensive process of applying for DACA, relying on a promise from the federal government that if they went through the legal processes, they would not be deported. DACA recipients are now particularly vulnerable because the federal government has their identifying information, their addresses, and their work history.

The impact of ending DACA reverberates well beyond the 800,000 recipients. Nearly three quarters of DACA recipients have a sibling, spouse, or child who is an American citizen.⁴ If Congress fails to act to protect DACA recipients, families will be torn apart. The American economy will suffer too. A study from the Cato Institute estimates that if the DACA recipients were to be deported, it would cost the federal government nearly \$60 billion and would reduce America's economic growth over the next decade by \$280 billion.⁵ The United States cannot afford to leave DACA recipients without protections.

We Urge Congress to Pass a Clean Dream Act

The lives of DACA recipients now lie in Congress's hands. Passing a clean bill that provides a pathway to citizenship for young immigrants brought to the United States as children is a moral imperative.

The Dream Act (S. 1615/H.R. 3440) would allow these young people to earn lawful permanent residence and eventually American citizenship if they: are longtime residents who came to the United States as children; graduate from high school or obtain a GED; pursue higher education, work lawfully for at least 3 years, or serve in the military; pass security and law enforcement background checks and pay an application fee; and demonstrate proficiency in the English language and knowledge of United States history. This bipartisan bill is a practical and necessary measure to protect DACA recipients, who are now so vulnerable.

It is also popular. The majority of Americans support a pathway to citizenship for DACA recipients and more than six in ten voters say that protecting Dreamers should be either an important or a top priority for Congress. The support for DACA recipients crosses ideological lines. More than two-thirds of self-identified Trump voters surveyed believe that Congress should pass legislation to allow DACA recipients to stay in the United States.⁶

² Anyone convicted of a felony, a significant misdemeanor, or three or more minor misdemeanors was ineligible for DACA. *Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals*, US Citizenship and Immigration Services, <https://www.uscis.gov/archive/consideration-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca#guidelines>.

³ Tom K. Wong.

⁴ Tom K. Wong.

⁵ Ike Brennan & Logan Albright, *The Economic and Fiscal Impact of Repealing DACA*, Cato Institute (Jan. 18, 2017), <https://www.cato.org/blog/economic-fiscal-impact-repealing-daca>.

⁶ Rebecca Savransky, Poll: Most Want 'Dreamers' to Have a Path to Citizenship, *The Hill* (Sept. 13, 2017), <http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/350417-poll-most-want-dreamers-to-have-a-path-to-citizenship>.

It would be wrong for Congress to use this crisis moment – and the anguish of nearly a million young people – to force through legislation building a wall along the southern border. There absolutely should be a debate about immigration enforcement policies, but on this there can be no disagreement: young immigrants brought to the United States as children should not be used as pawns to advance an anti-immigrant agenda.

Conclusion

We urge you to act quickly and decisively to pass a clean bill that creates a pathway to citizenship for young undocumented immigrants. It is good for our economy. It is good for our communities. And it is the right thing to do. We cannot afford to wait, leaving the lives of 800,000 young people – and their families, friends and communities – hanging in the balance.

Sincerely,



Marvin D. Nathan
National Chair



Jonathan A. Greenblatt
CEO