



**CWS Endorses the Dream Act of 2017 (S.1615/H.R.3440),
Strongly Urges Congress to Immediately Pass a Clean Dream Act Now**

As a 71-year old humanitarian organization representing 37 Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox communions and 34 refugee resettlement offices across the country, Church World Service (CWS) urges all Members of Congress to support the Dream Act of 2017 ([S.1615](#) / [H.R.3440](#)). It is critical that the Dream Act be enacted as clean legislation, without enforcement provisions such as funding for detention, deportation, or border militarization or proposals that would dismantle opportunities for family reunification. We cannot use these young people's plight as an excuse to escalate raids on their parents and community members. Congress must prioritize the immediate, uncompromised enactment of the Dream Act.

On September 5th, President Trump terminated the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. DACA has protected nearly 800,000 immigrant youth from deportation and allowed them to work, attend school, and raise a family. The consequences of terminating DACA are immediate, devastating, and profound. No new DACA applications are being considered, and DACA recipients are starting to see their protection revoked. Right now, more than 22,000 young people who could not meet the October 5th unexpected renewal deadline are starting to lose their status. Families and communities are feeling the effects at this very moment: mortgages cannot be paid, jobs are on the line, and higher education is abandoned.

DACA's termination crosses a moral line and puts hundreds of thousands of lives at risk, threatens the sanctity of family unity, and [jeopardizes](#) our [economy](#) with the [loss](#) of more than [\\$460 billion in GDP](#) over the course of 10 years and the removal of 685,000 workers from the workforce. As Americans and people of faith, we strive to love our neighbor and uphold the innate human dignity of each person. Dreamers worship in our pews, study in our schools, and work in our communities. For many, this is where they learned to ride a bike, celebrate our nation's holidays, and serve their communities. They are mothers, fathers, teachers, nurses, lawyers, scientists, and leaders of a new generation of Americans – and they make our nation stronger. It was an immoral decision to rescind DACA before legislation was enacted to protect them from deportation and offer them an opportunity to flourish.

This is not a partisan issue - [Republicans](#), [Democrats](#), and the [American public](#) support dreamers. Dreamers are immigrant youth who are parents and doctors; they serve in the military and as police officers; they rescued, [and died rescuing](#), Harvey flood victims; and they teach our children in our schools. In fact, [91% of dreamers](#) are employed, pay taxes, and contribute to Social Security. The [average age](#) dreamers entered the United States is 6 years old. Some don't even [speak the language](#) of the country where they were born. The bipartisan Dream Act of 2017, championed by Senators Graham (R-SC) and Durbin (D-IL) and Representatives Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and Roybal-Allard (D-CA), would [provide a pathway to citizenship](#) for dreamers and has [broad support from the faith community, state and local elected leaders, business leaders, faith](#) and [secular](#) educators, and [both sides of the aisle](#). The Dream Act was [crafted](#) in consultation with dreamers themselves and is the [strongest legislative vehicle](#) to permanently protect DACA recipients and [strengthen the U.S. economy](#).

Dreamers have worked tirelessly for the country they call home to recognize them as our own. The Dream Act of 2017 is the culmination of that legacy. Dreamers inspire us to live into our shared faith values of unconditional love for our neighbors and determined belief in the possibility of justice for all people. Their vision is our vision, that we can realize an immigration system that affirms the sanctity of family unity, respects the rights and dignity of all, and makes the American Dream truly achievable. Dreamers cannot wait, our businesses cannot wait, and our country cannot wait. It is equally imperative that Congress does not pair relief for Dreamers with policy that puts their parents, siblings, and other immigrants at increased risk of deportation or detention or further infringes upon the rights and safety of border communities. Our immigration system leaves millions unjustly detained, separated from family, and locked out of regularizing their status. Increased enforcement is not the remedy.

CWS calls on all Members of Congress to enact the Dream Act of 2017 (S.1615 and H.R. 3440), which is the only bipartisan, bicameral bill that would help dreamers, by the end of the year. The Dream Act must be enacted in its own right and not used as a political football to increase immigration detention, deportation, or border militarization. We pray that legislators remember the common values we all aspire to, which is the most basic of Sunday school lessons: to love our neighbors. CWS stands with dreamers, as we have for sixteen years. For too long, the path to citizenship has been a dream, and we call on Congress to make it a reality. As we consider our values of compassion, generosity of spirit, and welcome for the vulnerable, let us remember these values, uphold the dignity of all community members, and support immigration policies that treat our neighbors with the humanity and respect all people deserve.