

# PRESIDENTS' ALLIANCE | ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND IMMIGRATION

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April 24, 2019

U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator:

As the Steering Committee for the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration (Presidents' Alliance), we write in strong support of the Dream Act of 2019 and the Safe Environment from Countries Under Repression and in Emergency (SECURE) Act in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress.<sup>1</sup> Together, these bills would provide a roadmap to citizenship to Dreamers, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) & Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) holders. These bills represent the Senate's effort to protect these populations, similar to the U.S. House of Representatives' efforts through H.R. 6, the Dream and Promise Act of 2019, which the Presidents' Alliance similarly supports.<sup>2</sup> We thank Senators who are cosponsors of these bills and urge those who are not to consider co-sponsorship.

The need to protect immigrant youth and young adults is urgent, and time is of the essence. According to a Migration Policy Institute fact sheet published today and commissioned by the Presidents' Alliance, almost 100,000 Dreamers graduate from high school every year (see attached report) and their prospects for the future are in precarious limbo.<sup>3</sup> These young people, raised and educated in the United States—American in all but legal status—face highly uncertain educational and career pathways, even as they are passionate about contributing to the future of our nation. The anxiety and uncertainty is even more dire for those graduating now without the protections of DACA.

The non-partisan Presidents' Alliance is comprised of over 420 college and university presidents and chancellors of public and private institutions. Together, our members' institutions enroll over four million students across

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<sup>1</sup> Dream Act of 2019, S.874, 116<sup>th</sup> Cong. (2019); Safe Environment from Countries Under Repression and Emergency (SECURE) Act, S.879, 116<sup>th</sup> Cong. (2019).

<sup>2</sup> The Dream and Promise Act of 2019, H.R. 6, 116<sup>th</sup> Cong. (2019); Letter from Louis Caldera, Senior Advisor and Co-Chair, Steering Committee, Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration to Members of the U.S. House of Representatives (March 27, 2019), available at <https://www.presidentsimmigrationalliance.org/presidents-alliance-steering-committee-letter-in-support-of-dream-and-promise-act-of-2019/>.

<sup>3</sup> Jie Zong and Jeanne Batalova, *How Many Unauthorized Immigrants Graduate from U.S. High School Annually?*, Migration Policy Institute, April 2019, available at <https://www.presidentsimmigrationalliance.org/migration-policy-institute-fact-sheet-on-number-of-dreamers-graduating-from-high-school/>; see Appendix A.

41 states, D.C., and Puerto Rico. The Presidents' Alliance is committed to supporting policies that create a welcoming environment for undocumented, immigrant, and international students; and are deeply concerned about how changes in our nation's immigration policies and practices impact our students and campuses and the communities and states we serve.<sup>4</sup>

The bipartisan Dream Act of 2019, introduced by Senators Graham (R-SC) and Durbin (D-IL), would provide lawful permanent resident (LPR) status and the opportunity to apply for citizenship for upwards of 1.7 million Dreamers.<sup>5</sup> Under the bill, longtime residents who came to our country as children and graduate from high school or obtained a GED, pass stringent and exhaustive criminal background and national security checks, pay a fee, and who have not committed serious crimes would be able to apply for conditional permanent resident status (CPR). Once in CPR status, individuals who pursue higher education, work lawfully for three years or more, or serve in the military would be allowed to apply for LPR status.

The SECURE Act, introduced by Senators Feinstein (D-CA), Van Hollen (D-MD), Cardin (D-MD), and Kaine (D-VA), would allow TPS and DED holders (including those whose designations were terminated) to apply for LPR status, potentially providing relief to upwards of 437,000 foreign nationals. Individuals with recent or current TPS and DED designations could apply for relief, including individuals from South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, Nicaragua, Liberia (DED), Nepal, Haiti, El Salvador, and Honduras.<sup>6</sup> Like the Dream Act of 2019, relief under the SECURE Act requires payment of a fee and exhaustive background and security checks.

For colleges and universities, permanent protection for all Dreamers is particularly critical. Many DACA recipients and other Dreamers are deeply connected to higher education, as students or prospective students, and as alumni, family members, staff, or faculty of our schools. These individuals contribute daily to our campuses and communities. As higher education leaders, we see in our classrooms and labs and among our alumni and workers the drive, accomplishments and potential of these individuals; yet, without the permanent legislative relief that only Congress can provide, their anxiety and uncertainty for the future and their families continues to grow. Likewise, protection for TPS recipients is especially needed in light of the over 275,000 U.S. citizen children and youth with one or more TPS parents and the valued role of TPS holders in higher education as students, alumni, and as part of our campus workforces.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For more information about the Presidents' Alliance, visit <https://www.presidentsimmigrationalliance.org>.

<sup>5</sup> Jeanne Batalova and Ariel G. Ruiz Soto, *MPI Estimates of Potential Beneficiaries under the 2017 DREAM Act and the Recognizing America's Children Act*, Migration Policy Institute, Oct. 2017, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/content/mpi-estimates-potential-beneficiaries-under-2017-dream-act-and-recognizing-americas-children>.

<sup>6</sup> *Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED)*, Catholic Legal Immigration Network (March 28, 2019), <https://cliniclegal.org/tps>.

<sup>7</sup> Nicole Prechal Svajlenka, Angie Bautista-Chavez, and Laura Muñoz, *TPS Holders Are Integral Members of the U.S. Economy and Society*, Center for American Progress, Oct. 20, 2017, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2017/10/20/440400/tps-holders-are-integral-members-of-the-u-s-economy-and-society/>.

There is also a resounding economic argument to enact these two pieces of legislation. The failure to protect DACA recipients alone would lead, over ten years, to \$480.3 billion in GDP losses<sup>8</sup> and a reduction in \$39.3 billion in Social Security and Medicare contributions;<sup>9</sup> and \$6.3 billion in turnover costs.<sup>10</sup> In the TPS context, failing to protect TPS recipients from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti alone would, over ten years, lead to \$164 billion in GDP losses<sup>11</sup> and a reduction of \$6.9 billion in Social Security and Medicare contributions; and \$976 million in turnover costs.<sup>12</sup>

Importantly, the Dream Act of 2019 contains a variety of the Alliance's education and immigration priorities, including restoration of state authority to expand in-state tuition to undocumented immigrant students; and expanded access to Title IV federal student aid and financial assistance programs, such as grants, loans, work study, and services. These two bills represent an intelligent and thoughtful investment in immigrant students and their families and a vital way to ensure an effective return on investment for our local communities and regional economies. Providing long-term stability and greater certainty for immigrant youth, young adults, and long-time community members; and expanding and encouraging their access to higher education and employment will strengthen workforce development, increase the pools of skilled professionals, grow the potential of their economic contributions, and enhance our national prosperity.<sup>13</sup> A legislative solution to their predicament is not only the right thing to do by them, but in the best interests of our country.

For these reasons we at the Presidents' Alliance support both the Dream Act of 2019 and the SECURE Act and urge the Senate to pass these bills swiftly and without delay. If you have any questions, please contact Jose Magaña-Salgado at (202) 777-8998 or [jose@presidentsimmigrationalliance.org](mailto:jose@presidentsimmigrationalliance.org).

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<sup>8</sup> Nicole Prchal Svajlenka, Tom Jawetz, and Angie Bautista-Chavez, *A New Threat to DACA Could Cost States Billions of Dollars*, Center for American Progress, July 21, 2017, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2017/07/21/436419/new-threat-daca-cost-states-billions-dollars/>.

<sup>9</sup> Jose Magaña-Salgado, *Draining the Trust Funds: Ending DACA and the Consequences to Social Security and Medicare*, Immigrant Legal Resource Center, Oct. 2017, <https://www.ilrc.org/report-daca-economic-cost>.

<sup>10</sup> David Bier, *Ending DACA Will Impose Billions in Employer Compliance Costs*, Cato Institute, Sept. 1, 2017, <https://www.cato.org/blog/ending-daca-will-impose-billions-employer-compliance-costs>.

<sup>11</sup> Nicole Prchal Svajlenka, Angie Bautista-Chavez, and Laura Muñoz Lopez, *TPS Holders Are Integral Members of the U.S. Economy and Society*, Center for American Progress, Oct. 20, 2017, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2017/10/20/440400/tps-holders-are-integral-members-of-the-u-s-economy-and-society/>.

<sup>12</sup> Amanda Baran and Jose Magaña-Salgado, *Economic Contributions by Salvadoran, Honduran, and Haitian TPS Holders*, Immigrant Legal Resource Center, April 2017, <https://www.ilrc.org/report-tps-economic-cost>.

<sup>13</sup> Jeanne Batalova and Michael Fix, *Credentials for the Future: Mapping the Potential for Immigrant-Origin Adults in the United States*, Migration Policy Institute, March 2019, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/credentials-immigrant-origin-adults-united-states>;


Jacqueline Varas, Usama Zafar, *Estimating the Economic Contributions of DACA Recipients*, American Action Forum, Dec. 21, 2017, <https://www.americanactionforum.org/research/estimating-economic-contributions-daca-recipients/>.

Sincerely,



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Louis Caldera  
Senior Advisor and  
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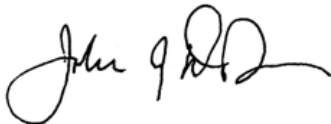
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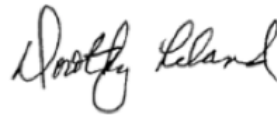
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