

## **NEW REPORT: CONGRESS AND STATES MUST EXPAND JOB LICENSING TO DREAMERS AND IMMIGRANTS**

*Hundreds of Careers Unavailable Due to Barriers to Occupational Licenses*

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 18, 2019

Contact: Jose Magaña-Salgado ([jose@presidentsalliance.org](mailto:jose@presidentsalliance.org))

**Washington, D.C.**—Today, the [Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration](#); [Niskanen Center](#); [FWD.us](#); [United We Dream](#); [Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.](#); and [TheDream.US](#) released a groundbreaking report that urges Congress and state legislatures to expand access to professional, business, and commercial licenses (also known as “occupational licenses”) to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders, and all other immigrants with the ability to lawfully work. Over 1,100 different occupations require a license and approximately 25 percent of all workers nationwide are required to obtain a license in order to work in their occupations. And yet, federal and state laws prevent many immigrants—even with those with legal permission to be in the country—from even applying for those licenses.

**READ THE REPORT:** [bit.ly/LicensureReport](https://bit.ly/LicensureReport)

The report urges: (1) Congress to enact legislation ending the federal and state prohibitions on occupational licenses for DACA recipients, TPS holders, and all immigrants with work permits; (2) Congress and states to enact non-discrimination prohibitions for occupational licenses; and (3) states to implement other policies to increase portability and access to licenses.

**Miriam Feldblum, Executive Director of the Presidents' Alliance, stated,** “Our higher education faculty and institutions invest years building and developing students' knowledge base and skillsets, often times for careers that require professional and occupational licensing. For our nation to receive dividends from the education of these talented scholars and hardworking learners, it is absolutely critical that they be allowed access to federal and state occupational licensing schemes. In doing so, our country will ensure that these alumni can contribute fully to their communities and states, and achieve economic self-sufficiency for themselves and their families.”

**Kristie De Peña, Director of Immigration at the Niskanen Center, stated,** “Americans and lawmakers alike should seek to capitalize on the skills, talents, and educational attainment of all productive and lawful workers, and not create artificial barriers to gainful employment. Congress and state governments must remove the onerous regulations that prevent certain immigrant populations from enhancing our nation’s productivity and economic efficiency, and allow them to grow and thrive in America.”

**Ali Procopio, University Program Director at FWD.us, stated,** “Students strive for years to gain the skills and the building blocks they need to work in careers that they’re passionate about—such as in nursing, teaching, and engineering—and it makes zero sense to deny these talented, hardworking individuals the licensing that will help make those dreams a reality. Not only is empowering these students to reach their full potential the right thing to do, but our communities and our economy will see enormous benefit from helping them to contribute fully by extending appropriate professional and occupational licensing in fields that are frequently underserved.”

**Juliana Macedo do Nascimento, State/Local Policy Manager for United We Dream, stated,** “Across the country, there are immigrants who are kept from earning a living for themselves and their families. These are people like street vendors, independent business owners, nurses, lawyers and teachers, who, because of their immigration status, are kept from from earning professional, commercial, and business licenses. That is wrong. States should work to ensure they are welcoming to all immigrants. Creating an environment where all immigrants are able to thrive and make a living for themselves by not restricting access to these licenses.”

**Christy Williams, State and Local Advocacy Attorney for the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, stated,** “Eliminating barriers to occupational licenses for immigrants goes beyond expanding access to job opportunities. It is about protecting the inherent dignity that comes with reaching your career goals. Legislators should establish systems of support that empower immigrants to achieve the fulfilment and satisfaction of contributing their talents to the workforce.”

**Gaby Pacheco, Director of Advocacy, Development, and Communications for TheDream.US, stated,** “As the nation’s largest college access program for DACA recipients and other immigrants, licensing access is absolutely critical for our Scholars and Alumni to fully utilize their higher education degree. In a recent [survey](#) of our Scholars, 66 percent indicated they were studying in a career that would require licensure, including large number of Scholars seeking to fill the nation’s shortage of nurses, medical professionals, and bilingual teachers. Representing over 5,000 Scholars and graduates, we urge Congress to swiftly enact legislation to expand licensure to this cohort of students and young professionals. We have said time and again, what’s good for DREAMers is good for America and providing licensure will ensure that their contributions, and potential are fully unleashed.”

---

The nonpartisan **Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration** brings together college and university leaders dedicated to increasing public understanding of how immigration policies and practices impact our students, campuses and communities, and supporting policies that create a welcoming environment for undocumented, immigrant, and international students. The Alliance is comprised of over 430 presidents and chancellors of public and private colleges and universities, representing over four million students in 41 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico.

**The Niskanen Center**, which launched operations in January 2015, is a nonpartisan think tank that works to promote an open society; a social order that is open to political, cultural, and social change; open to free inquiry; open to individual autonomy; open to the poor and marginalized; open to commerce and trade; open to people who may wish to come or go; open to different beliefs and cultures; open to the search for truth; and a government that protects these freedoms while advancing the cause of open societies around the world.

**FWD.us** is a bipartisan political organization that believes America's families, communities, and economy thrive when more individuals are able to achieve their full potential. For too long, our broken immigration and criminal justice systems have locked too many people out of the American dream. Founded by leaders in the technology and business communities, we seek to grow and galvanize political support to break through partisan gridlock and achieve meaningful reforms. Together, we can move America forward.

**United We Dream (UWD)** is the largest immigrant youth-led organization in the nation, a powerful network made up of over 400,000 members and 48 affiliate organizations across 26 states. UWD's vision is to build a multi-racial, multi-ethnic movement of young people who organize and advocate at the local and national levels for the dignity and justice of immigrants and communities of color in the United States.

The **Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC)** is the largest nationwide network of nonprofit immigration programs, with 380 affiliates in 49 states and the District of Columbia. Programs include training and supporting immigration legal agencies, advocating for humane immigration policies, integration support and legal representation for immigrant religious workers. CLINIC also is a partner in providing pro bono representation to detained families, and offers public education materials on immigrants' rights and Catholic teaching on migration. CLINIC's work draws from Catholic social teaching to promote the dignity and protect the rights of immigrants in partnership with our network.

**TheDream.US** is the nation's largest college access and success program for DREAMers, having provided 4,000 scholarships to students with DACA and TPS at more than 75 partner colleges in 15 states and Washington, DC. We believe that all young people, regardless of where they were born, should have the opportunity to fulfill

their potential, gain an education, and fully participate in the country that they call home.

##