

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 22, 2020

Senator Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell:

Following the Supreme Court's landmark decision on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), last week President Trump tweeted, "We will be submitting enhanced papers shortly in order to properly fulfil the Supreme Court's ruling & request of yesterday." The Senate has a responsibility to consider legislation to protect the young immigrants who are eligible for DACA. We call on you to immediately schedule a vote in the Senate on H.R. 6, the American Dream and Promise Act, legislation to give DACA recipients a path to citizenship that passed the House of Representatives more than a year ago.

Eight years ago, following bipartisan requests from Congress, President Obama used his legal authority to establish DACA. DACA provides temporary protection from deportation on an individualized basis to immigrants who arrived in the United States as children if they register with the government, pay a fee, and pass criminal and national security background checks.

The young people who are eligible for DACA, known as Dreamers, are American in every way except for their immigration status. More than 800,000 Dreamers have come forward and received DACA. DACA has been vital for Dreamers, who are contributing to our country as soldiers, nurses, teachers, and small business owners, and in many other ways.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 200,000 DACA recipients are working in occupational areas that the Trump Administration's Department of Homeland Security (DHS) identifies as part of the "essential critical infrastructure workforce." This includes an estimated 41,700 DACA recipients working in the health care industry, including physicians and physicians in training, intensive care nurses, paramedics, respiratory therapists, nursing assistants, and health technicians. Congress must take action to ensure these essential workers are not deported to countries they barely remember even as our nation grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic.

When President Trump announced his repeal of DACA, he called on Congress to "legalize DACA," and last week he tweeted, "I have wanted to take care of DACA recipients better than the Do Nothing Democrats, but for two years they refused to negotiate." In fact, the President has rejected numerous bipartisan deals to protect Dreamers. For example, on January 11, 2018, in a meeting in the Oval Office, he rejected a bipartisan immigration agreement that included protection for Dreamers. On February 15, 2018, the Senate considered a bipartisan amendment offered by Senators Mike Rounds (R-SD) and Angus King (I-ME), which included a path to citizenship for Dreamers. A bipartisan majority supported the amendment, but it failed to reach the 60 votes needed to pass because the Trump Administration issued a statement of

opposition. On the same day, the Senate rejected the President's immigration proposal by a bipartisan supermajority of 39-60.

With Republicans in the majority, the United States Senate has failed to address our immigration challenges. In the 116th Congress, the Border Security and Immigration Subcommittee has held only one hearing; the Senate Judiciary Committee has voted on only one immigration bill – the Trump Administration's anti-asylum bill – and the Republican majority limited debate to only one hour and did not allow a single amendment to be offered; and you, as Majority Leader, have not brought a single immigration bill to the floor of the Senate.

It is not too late to change course. As Majority Leader, you can immediately schedule a vote in the Senate for the American Dream and Promise Act. It would be an American tragedy to deport DACA recipients who are saving lives in the midst of this pandemic. We must ensure these talented young immigrants are not forced to stop working when the need for their public service has never been greater. And we must give them the chance they deserve to become American citizens.

We, and hundreds of thousands of Dreamers, await your response.

Sincerely,



RICHARD J. DURBIN
United States Senator

CHARLES E. SCHUMER
United States Senator

PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator

DIANNE FEINSTEIN
United States Senator

PATTY MURRAY
United States Senator

RON WYDEN
United States Senator

JACK REED
United States Senator

THOMAS R. CARPER
United States Senator

DEBBIE STABENOW
United States Senator

MARIA CANTWELL
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ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator

BENJAMIN L. CARDIN
United States Senator

BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator

SHERROD BROWN
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ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.
United States Senator

AMY KLOBUCHAR
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BRIAN SCHATZ
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EDWARD J. MARKEY
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CORY A. BOOKER
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