

Relief, development and peace in the name of Christ

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Dear Members of Congress,

We urge you to immediately pass a clean Dream Act 2017 (S. 1615/H.R. 3440) to protect Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients who are now at risk of deportation.

We were deeply troubled by President Trump's decision to end the DACA program and are fearful for what this action will mean for nearly 700,000 youth and young adults, including many in our Mennonite and Brethren in Christ congregations. The DACA program has provided protection from deportation and work permits to those who were brought to the U.S. as children—many as babies and toddlers who do not even remember the countries in which they were born. Thanks to DACA, thousands have been able to attend college, work legally, and obtain driver's licenses. Many now have children of their own.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) provides documentation services for immigrants, including assistance in applying for and renewing DACA status. One young man who has been working with an MCC attorney since he was 15 now has DACA status and is attending university this fall. A good student all of his life, without DACA he would not have had the chance to pursue a college degree. His story is but one of the hundreds of thousands of young people who have benefitted from DACA and who benefit our communities in so many ways.

The president's decision to end DACA makes it imperative that Congress immediately pass the Dream Act to protect those who will soon be at risk of deportation, lost jobs, and separation from their families. **Passage of the Dream Act should not be tied to border security or increased immigration enforcement measures.** Protecting Dreamers must not come at the cost of additional anti-immigrant measures that serve only to terrorize communities and needlessly separate families.

Building border walls focuses on the symptoms rather than the causes of migration. As long as poverty, lack of opportunity and violent conflict push people to come to the U.S.—and, as long as opportunities, safety and family members pull people here—there will be migration. When the legal routes are either not available or severely restricted, as they are in the U.S., people will come whatever way they can. And no wall will stop them.

Similarly, increased enforcement measures—including more for-profit detention facilities, more immigration enforcement officers, and the removal of protections for unaccompanied minors—will lead to more racial profiling, more family separations and needless suffering.

We urge you to work for fair and compassionate immigration policies, such as the Dream Act, that are consistent with God's teachings to welcome the stranger and care for the vulnerable.

Sincerely,



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