

ASA Statement on Trump's Decision to End the DACA Program

September 5, 2017

The American Sociological Association (ASA) calls on President Trump to reverse his decision to end the Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals Program (DACA). Absent such a reversal, we implore Congress to reinstate the program with expedience. DACA currently affects almost 800,000 young, undocumented immigrants by providing a work permit and protection from deportation. DACA status expires every two years, and immigrants are eligible for renewal.

Our association includes teachers, instructors, and professors of sociology, and we are concerned about the impact of this decision on classroom and campus life. More than 600 college and university presidents across the United States have similarly expressed support for DACA. Immigrants who are eligible for DACA have lived in the United States continuously since they were children and have engaged in productive educational, work, and/or military activity in America. An estimated 10,000 undocumented immigrants graduate from college each year. These students provide diversity on campus that enhances the educational experience for all. Many of them have demonstrated resilience in the face of very stressful circumstances, often including limited finances to support tuition and basic life expenses and deportation of friends and family members. A recent report by the Institute for Immigration, Globalization, and Education at UCLA indicates that 86% of students with DACA reported positive educational impact. Students who receive DACA are more likely to actively participate in college activities. Ending this program will fundamentally destabilize the lives of these young immigrants and those with whom they are sharing an educational experience.

We are also concerned with this recent action because DACA recipients are integral parts of our communities. They report higher rates of working, better access to transportation, and more stable housing. Recent research shows that DACA is associated with a higher sense of national belonging. With DACA, these young immigrants have an opportunity to continue to actively contribute to our society. Without DACA, these immigrants may be removed from our communities and forced to go to countries they do not know. We hope President Trump and Members of Congress will consider these issues carefully and reinstate DACA without further delay.