

Happy DACA Anniversary!

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Written by: Abigail Pina & Ciriac Alvarez Valle



Today we are celebrating nine years of DACA by sharing more information about this program and HR6: The Dream and Promise Act.

Who are Dreamers?

Dreamers are immigrant youth, who entered the U.S. before their 18th birthday. This name comes from the original Dream Act 2001 that was introduced by Senator Dick Durban (IL) and Senator Orrin Hatch (UT) and is commonly used when referring to this group of immigrants.

Some Dreamers are [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals \(DACA\)](#) recipients, the program that began under President Obama under an executive order in 2012. Since 2012, DACA recipients have been able to work legally, have protection against deportation, and given the ability to obtain drivers licenses, credit cards, and more. DACA recipients are everywhere. They are restaurant workers, healthcare workers, sanitation workers, construction workers, and more. They are members of our community who have built lives and families in the U.S. We have seen time and time again that this program has been under attack and It is past time that permanent protection for this group of young people is passed.

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DACA recipients in Utah

With over 650,000 DACA recipients in the U.S. [Utah has about 8,490 recipients](#) as of March 2020. [Studies have shown](#) time and time again that DACA works. Most DACA recipients are either working or going to school, approximately 40% of DACA recipients are in school. Of those in school, 83% are pursuing a bachelor's degree or higher. Additionally, thanks to DACA 58% reported moving to a job with better pay. While DACA remains an important program, a 2-year renewal process is no way to live or to create a future. A measure that would provide a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers has continually been supported, a recent [poll done by the Deseret News and the Hinckley Institute of Politics](#) showed that 55% of Utahns supported a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers.

What is H.R.6: The Dream and Promise Act 2021?

[H.R. 6: The Dream and Promise Act 2021](#) is a bipartisan measure that would create a three-step pathway to citizenship for an estimated 4.4 million eligible immigrants including: Dreamers, DACA, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) recipients the ability to apply for permanent legal status in the U.S. This important piece of legislation will grant DACA recipients an opportunity for an expedited process to receive Permanent Residency "Green cards" through employment, education, or military service. It also grants a path to citizenship to Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) holders, and other eligible Dreamers. If you'd like to learn more, you can also watch our whole explainer on the different federal immigration bills being considered [here](#).

Why we need immigration reform now!

Pushing for comprehensive and humane immigration reform now is crucial. We must create a humane immigration system that prioritizes keeping families safe and together. We must create a system that recognizes the contributions immigrants in our state have made. We are conscious, that DACA recipients represent a small portion of the immigrant community and while we celebrate DACA's 9th Anniversary we also will continue to advocate for meaningful immigration reform for the rest of our immigrant community in our state.

The pandemic has continued to show us that undocumented immigrants are an

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essential part of Utah, and ensure they are supported during this public health crisis and beyond. Until then, undocumented, and mixed-status families remain vulnerable to deportation, family separation, detention, and exploitation.

This year we have an opportunity to finally pass immigration reform that creates a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers through HR6 and continue advocating for larger reform for the rest of our immigrant community like the Essential Workers Act or the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021. We believe the Biden administration and Congress can act and finally fully recognize our undocumented immigrant community who are essential workers, family members, colleagues, and neighbors.

We celebrate the impact DACA has had in our state and urge Senator Romney and Senator Lee to vote YES on HR6: The Dream and Promise Act 2021!

Celebrate with us by sharing our social media posts, [signing this petition](#), or contacting Senator Romney and Senator Lee today! And if you are a DACA recipient, visit www.UtahDACA.com to learn about resources available to you in our state!

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