

Utah Immigrant Advocacy Coalition Statement on DACA's 12th Anniversary

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Written by: Liliana Bolaños



On DACA's 12th anniversary, the undersigned members of the newly rebranded Utah Immigrant Advocacy Coalition (formerly Utah DACA) join communities nationwide to commemorate this vital program's profound impact and advocate for a more just and inclusive immigration system.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was created in 2012 by President Barack Obama under Executive Order [1]. This initiative has enabled DACA recipients to work legally, pursue education, and build their families, among other opportunities. As we reflect on the journey of DACA over the past 12 years, we recognize the invaluable contributions of the 7,030 DACA recipients to the state of Utah who enrich our communities, economy, and social fabric of our state in immeasurable ways.

DACA recipients work across different industries, including the fields of education, health, finance, technology, and hospitality. The economic contributions of DACA recipients are substantial, with a total of \$55.5 million paid in federal taxes and \$36.5 million in state and local taxes [2]. These contributions bolster our economy and support essential public services that benefit all residents of Utah. However, DACA recipients are more than just economic contributors; they are our neighbors, friends,

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and family members. They enrich the cultural landscape of Utah with their diverse backgrounds, talents, and aspirations, making our communities stronger and more vibrant.

Although DACA currently offers relief to 530,110 people, it was never intended to be a permanent solution. The persistent legal challenges to the DACA program and the absence of permanent protection have exacerbated instability and uncertainty in the lives of DACA recipients. With a looming Supreme Court Decision, it is imperative that a humane solution be passed for the lives of hundreds of thousands since its establishment.

As we mark another DACA anniversary, we remind our Congress members of their power to pass comprehensive and humane immigration reform for DACA recipients and other undocumented immigrants. DACA recipients deserve more than to live in two-year increments.

As we honor the 12th anniversary of DACA, reflecting on both the progress and challenges ahead is imperative. The Utah Immigrant Advocacy Coalition urges our community members to join us in calling on Congress to take bold, decisive, and humane action to end the cycle of uncertainty for DACA recipients. Let us stand together and make our voices heard, advocating for the necessary reforms that uphold the dignity and security of every individual who calls Utah home.

Signed,

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[1] *Deferred action for childhood arrivals: Who can be considered?* (2015, August 5). *whitehouse.gov*. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2012/08/15/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-who-can-be-considered>

[2] *Take a look: How immigrants drive the economy in Utah.* (n.d.). *American Immigration Council*. <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/utah/#>