

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 11, 2025

Angelica Alfonso-Royals
Acting Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
5900 Capital Gateway Drive
Camp Springs, MD 20746

Dear Acting Director Alfonso-Royals:

Noncitizens brought to the United States as children, often known as Dreamers, are American in every way but their immigration status. Many only know this country as their home, and they contribute every day to this great nation by paying taxes and serving in critical roles, such as police officers, teachers, and nurses. Americans overwhelmingly support providing Dreamers a path to citizenship,¹ and in December 2024, President Trump stated that he supported protections for Dreamers to remain in the United States.² Consistent with this statement, we implore you to use your authority at United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to resume processing initial applications for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and provide such protections for Dreamers immediately.

In 2001, the Dream Act was introduced on a bipartisan basis to provide a path to citizenship to undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children but remained vulnerable to deportation. Since that time, the Dream Act has been introduced in every Congress. It has passed both the House of Representatives and the Senate with bipartisan majority votes, but no version has yet to be signed into law.³ In response to bipartisan pressure to protect Dreamers until Congress acted,⁴ the Obama Administration implemented DACA through a policy memorandum in 2012.⁵

¹ Dan Gordon, *Survey: Americans Want a Legislative Solution for Dreamers*, NATIONAL IMMIGRATION FORUM & THE BULLFINCH GROUP (June 10, 2024), <https://immigrationforum.org/article/new-survey-americans-want-a-legislative-solution-for-dreamers/>; Jens Manuel Krogstad, *Americans broadly support legal status for immigrants brought to the U.S. illegally as children*, PEW RESEARCH CENTER (June 17, 2020), <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/06/17/americans-broadly-support-legal-status-for-immigrants-brought-to-the-u-s-illegally-as-children/>.

² Kristen Welker, *Trump says he wants DACA recipients to be able to remain in U.S.*, NBC NEWS (Dec. 8, 2024), <https://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/video/trump-says-he-wants-daca-recipients-to-be-able-to-remain-in-u-s-226490949921>.

³ American Immigration Counsel, *The Dream Act: an overview. The Dream Act, DACA, and Other Policies Designed to Protect Dreamers*, (May 8, 2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/dream-act-overview#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20Dream%20Act,Congress%20and%20similar%20legislative%20proposals>.

⁴ Dick Durbin, *Durbin, Lugar Ask Secretary Napolitano to Stop Deportations of Dream Act Students*, SENATE PRESS RELEASE (April 21, 2010), <https://www.durbin.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/durbin-lugar-ask-secretary-napolitano-to-stop-deportations-of-dream-act-students>.

⁵ Janet Napolitano, *Memorandum for Exercising Prosecutorial Discretion with Respect to Individuals Who Came to the United States As Children*, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (June 15, 2012), <https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/s1-exercising-prosecutorial-discretion-individuals-who-came-to-us-as-children.pdf>.

Since 2012, more than 825,000 people have received deferred action pursuant to DACA.⁶ Many DACA recipients report that deferred action—and the accompanying employment authorization—allowed them to apply for their first job or move to a higher-paying position more commensurate with their skills.⁷ Since its establishment, DACA recipients have contributed an estimated \$140 billion to the U.S. economy in spending power, and \$40 billion dollars in combined federal, payroll, state, and local taxes.⁸

In 2021, U.S. District Court Judge Andrew Hanen halted the DACA program and enjoined USCIS from approving any new DACA applications nationwide. While the program was enjoined, USCIS has continued to accept and hold initial applications, and in 2022, the Department of Homeland Security published the DACA Final Rule, codifying the 2012 memorandum establishing DACA into regulation.⁹ Over 100,000 initial DACA applications are pending with USCIS.¹⁰

On January 17, 2025, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals issued a decision limiting Judge Hanen’s injunction to Texas.¹¹ Pursuant to the order, in Texas, DACA must resume as a limited program providing protection from deportation for current DACA recipients, but without access to work authorization or driver’s licenses as part of those renewals. This order went into effect on March 11, giving USCIS the authority to start processing initial DACA applications from states other than Texas. However, three months later, USCIS has not made any public announcement on whether new DACA applications will be processed; nor has the agency begun processing initial applications that have been pending with the agency for years.

⁶ See *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Quarterly Report (Fiscal Year 2021, Q1)*, U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES (March, 2021), https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/DACA_performancedata_fy2021_qtr1.pdf.

⁷ Tom K. Wong, *2023 National DACA Study: Survey Fielded 10/01/23 to 12/31/23*, U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY CENTER (2023), <https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/03/New-DACA-Survey-2023-Toplines14.pdf>; Tom K. Wong, et al., *2023 Survey of DACA Recipients Highlights Economic Advancement, Continued Uncertainty Amid Legal Limbo*, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS (March 25, 2024), <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/2023-survey-of-daca-recipients-highlights-economic-advancement-continued-uncertainty-amid-legal-limbo/5>.

⁸ Coalition for the American Dream, *Forfeiting the Trillion-Dollar Dream: the long-term, staggering human and economic cost of ending DACA*, (June 2024), https://www.coalitionfortheamericandream.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/240529_C4AD_DACAREport_v2_Web.pdf.

⁹ 8 CFR § 236.21-236.25.

¹⁰ See *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Quarterly Report (Fiscal Year 2025, Quarter 1)*, U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES (April 2025), https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/daca_performancedata_fy2025_q1.xlsx; Also see Julia Marnin, *Thousands of Pending DACA Application on Pause After July Court Ruling Suspends Program*, NEWSWEEK (July 23, 2021), <https://www.newsweek.com/thousands-pending-daca-applications-pause-after-july-court-ruling-suspends-program-1612694>.

¹¹ *State of Texas, et al. v. U.S.A., et al.*, 23-40653 (5th Cir. 2025), <https://www.ca5.uscourts.gov/opinions/pub/23/23-40653-CV0.pdf>. The decision was issued on January 17, 2025, and became the Fifth Circuit’s final word on this matter when it issued its mandate on March 11, 2025.

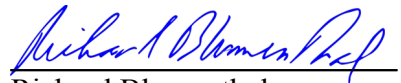
We urge you to begin processing these DACA applications immediately, consistent with the Fifth Circuit decision and existing regulations, and to ensure Dreamers eligible to file initial DACA applications can do so as soon as possible.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



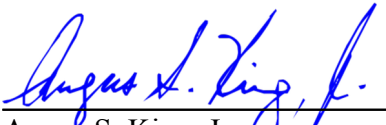
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



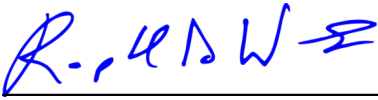
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



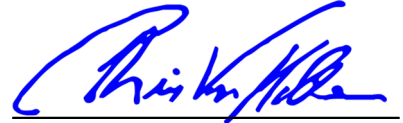
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Andy Kim
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



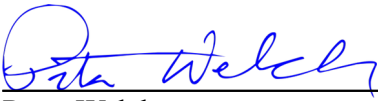
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



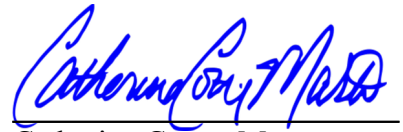
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



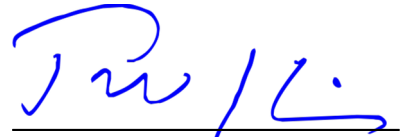
Peter Welch
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



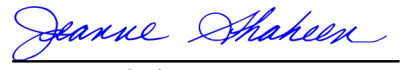
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



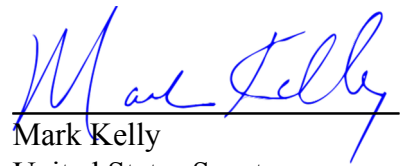
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



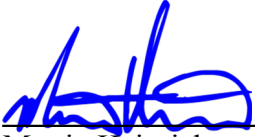
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



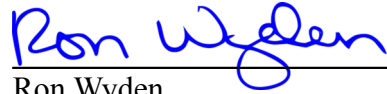
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



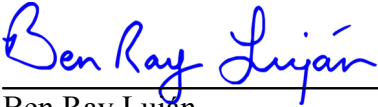
Mark Kelly
United States Senator



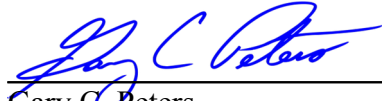
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



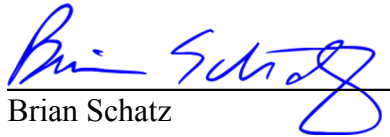
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



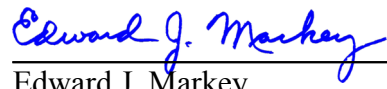
Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



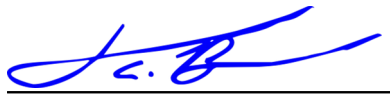
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



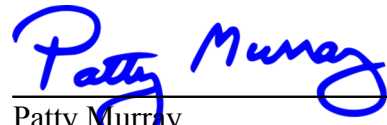
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



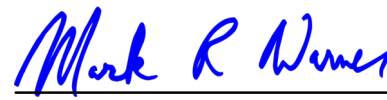
John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



John Fetterman
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Elissa Slotkin
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator

cc: Joseph Edlow
Senior Advisor, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary