

Prepared Opening Remarks of Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa  
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Hearing on “H.R. 6, American Dream and Promise Act of 2021”  
Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Today’s hearing addresses a topic of interest to many members of Congress and Americans around the country.

Like you, Mr. Chairman, I have worked to find a legislative solution to address the DACA population. In 2018, I did just that when I introduced the [Secure and Succeed Act](#) with several members of this committee.

I know this is an issue of great importance to you, and I know that you have been leading bipartisan discussions in recent weeks to try and reach an agreement. As Ranking Member of this committee, I look forward to participating in those discussions moving forward.

I’d like to make two brief points about the ongoing debate over legal status for undocumented young people brought here as children. First, any legislation providing legal status for those young people must include meaningful border security and immigration enforcement measures.

The need for robust border security and enforcement measures has been demonstrated by the current crisis at our southern border. A crisis that is a direct result of the Biden Administration’s policies.

Whether it be terminating physical barrier construction at the border, severely limiting the ability of ICE to enforce our immigration laws, or supporting sanctuary cities, the Biden Administration has actively sought to undermine border security and immigration enforcement.

Therefore, it shouldn’t be a surprise that, last month, total encounters at the southern border were up 675% from May 2020.

For unaccompanied children, encounters were up 1,305% from last May. For family units, it was 4,143%. These numbers are staggering.

And the Administration doesn’t seem to be doing much about it. The President and Vice President still have not even been to the border. When the Vice President was asked about it last week, her response was “and I haven’t been to Europe.”

Like most of this Administration’s responses to the crisis at the border, it was a truly baffling statement.

If we want to provide legal status for Dreamers, we must secure our border so that we don’t find ourselves in this same situation again in 20 or 30 years. Unfortunately, the Biden Administration doesn’t appear to be serious about doing that. And the bills we’re discussing today don’t even attempt to do that.

Finally, it is important that any bill providing legal status to undocumented young people, especially DACA recipients, be properly scoped. The American Dream and Promise Act and the Dream Act fail that test in a number of ways. I'll highlight just a few of them.

First, they would provide legal status to millions of illegal immigrants who have no connection at all to the DACA program – including illegal immigrants who were not even in the United States when DACA was created. In the case of the American Dream and Promise Act, an illegal immigrant need only have been in the United States since January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year in order to qualify.

Second, as we will hear from some of our witnesses, these bills would allow illegal immigrants with criminal records to be eligible for legal status. That defies common sense.

Third, they would allow illegal immigrants with a final order of removal to legalize anyway.

Finally, they don't contain a cutoff date for entry or a maximum age. As an example, a 68-year old illegal immigrant who entered the United States illegally at the age of 17 in 1970 could qualify as a "Dreamer" under these bills. Again, that defies common sense.

All that being said, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today, and I hope we can ultimately come up with a rational and bipartisan solution to this issue.