



Working to Reduce Poverty in America.

July 27, 2017

Unites States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator/Representative:

I write on behalf of Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) in support of the “Dream Act of 2017” (H.R. 3440, S.1615). This bipartisan legislation, introduced yesterday in the House by Congresswomen Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-40) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL-27) and in the Senate on July 20, 2017, by Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Richard Durbin (D-IL), would protect numerous immigrant youth from deportation, including approximately 780,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients.

The Dream Act is intended to protect immigrant youth who entered the United States as children and know America as their only home. The bill offers qualifying immigrant youth “conditional permanent resident status” and a path to full, lawful permanent residency and eventual citizenship.

To qualify an applicant would have to show that he or she entered the U.S. as a child, was continuously present in the United States for at least four years prior to enactment of the bill, meet certain admissibility and security requirements, and have obtained or be pursuing secondary education. In addition, the bill would allow recipients of conditional status the opportunity to obtain permanent residency if they satisfy requirements, which include: background checks; demonstrated English proficiency; and either education in a higher learning institution, honorable military service, three years of employment in the United States, or a hardship exception.

Catholic Social Teaching stresses the uncompromising need to protect the dignity of every human being, particularly that of our children. These young people were brought to the United States by their parents to provide their children with hope, opportunity, and safety that they could not find in their home countries. As such, America is the only home they have ever truly known. It is both our moral duty and in our nation’s best interest to protect them and allow them to reach their God-given potential.

The Dream Act of 2017 is the first step in the need for comprehensive and holistic reform of our nation’s immigration laws. We stand ready to work with you to reform our immigration system in a just and humane manner.

Sincerely,

Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD
President and CEO

Episcopal Liaison
The Most Reverend
David A. Zubik, D.D.
Bishop of Pittsburgh

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