

NEW JERSEY BUSINESS IMMIGRATION COALITION

A Permanent Solution to the DACA Problem Will Provide a Boost to the American Economy

At a time when the American economy is struggling to find enough workers to fill existing job openings, an entire group of young people, raised and educated in America, may be denied the opportunity to use their skills and training for their own advancement, as well as for the benefit of other Americans.

Although the ten-year-old Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program tried to address this problem, it was never intended to be a permanent solution. Members of both parties, as well as the majority of Americans, recognized that only Congress could give them full and durable rights as Americans. Yet ten years have gone by, and nothing has been done.

Now court challenges threaten the continuation of the program, large numbers of young people are locked out of the program, and those with DACA protections could easily lose them.

Over the years, more than 800,000 individuals brought here as children have relied on DACA work permits and deportation protections to pursue higher education and join the workforce. Although worries over the possible rescission of DACA never disappeared, DACA recipients had a huge burden lifted off their shoulders resulting in [documented improvements](#) in their emotional well-being, along with impressive academic achievements.

The initial cohort of DACA recipients has now grown up. A [recent study](#) finds that the overwhelming majority (at least 85 percent) are now participating in the labor force. More than one-third (37%) are married, and more than 4 in 10 (42%) have at least one child at home. Their efforts to achieve the American dream, however, could be in vain if the courts rule that President Obama exceeded his authority in granting them protections under DACA. Such a ruling would result in their loss of permission to work legally in the U.S. The [Migration Policy Institute](#) estimates that there are 10,000 employed DACA recipients in New Jersey.

Not only are these young people threatened with loss of status, an even larger number are barred by court order from applying to participate in the program. Of the nearly 100,000 undocumented students graduating high school each year, only a quarter are eligible for DACA protections. Even if allowed to apply, many of them wouldn't qualify because of age requirements under the original program. An estimated 427,000 undocumented students are currently enrolled in higher education, but less than half are DACA-eligible.

The Coalition believes that it is contrary to our nation's interests to hold these young people hostage to the fate of policy deliberations on other immigration matters.

Their homes, their upbringing, their education, their friendships, and their language are all largely American. They have no other future than in this country. A [study](#) from the Migration Policy Institute found that DACA holders contributed nearly \$42 billion to the U.S. gross domestic product each year and added \$3.4 billion to the federal balance sheet. If we choose to extract them from the American economy, we will all pay a price. Employers, in particular, will have to absorb the cost of recruiting, hiring, and training replacement workers, who may not be available to fill these positions.

The New Jersey Business Immigration Coalition urges all members of the New Jersey congressional delegation to support bipartisan legislation providing a pathway to citizenship for this important segment of New Jersey's population.

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