

Protect the Dreamers, the Recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) with a Pathway to Permanent Residence

This AIW expresses UUA support for the Dreamers and calls on Congress to pass legislation giving them a pathway to permanent residence. It also calls on UUs to support the Dreamers in their communities and contact their members of Congress to advocate for their protection.

Proposed by: Bob Warner, partnering with Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ), Pablo DeJesus, executive director of UUSJ, & Terry Grogan, co-convenor of the Immigration Action Team, UUSJ.

WHEREAS, Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ) and many Unitarian Universalists hold that no human being is illegal and all merit treatment with inherent worth and dignity;

WHEREAS, Unitarian Universalists have a deep history passing Actions of Immediate Witness and Statements of Conscience in support of immigrants and a healthy immigration system;

WHEREAS, Immigrants and migrants are members of our families, our households, and our communities and are integral to the social and economic fabric of our society;

WHEREAS, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is an immigration policy that allows some undocumented immigrants, who were brought to the United States as children, to receive a two-year renewable period of deferred action from deportation and an employment authorization document (work permit) in the U.S.;

WHEREAS, DACA has provided temporary relief to more than 825,000 undocumented immigrants since 2012;

WHEREAS, current DACA recipients (often referred to as Dreamers) have lived here for more than 15 years, and nearly 80% of them are employed, many in jobs deemed essential;

WHEREAS, DACA recipients have families here--more than 1.3 million people live with a DACA recipient, including more than 300,000 U.S.-born children who have at least one parent with DACA;

WHEREAS, DACA recipients make significant contributions to the U.S. economy— each year DACA recipient households pay \$6.2 billion in federal taxes, \$3.3 billion in state and local taxes, and, after taxes, have \$25.3 billion in spending power;

WHEREAS, on July 16, 2021, a U.S. district court judge ruled that DACA violated the law and prohibited the government from accepting new applications to the program but allowed current recipients to keep their status while the case goes through the appeals process;

WHEREAS, on October 5, 2022, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed that DACA is unlawful but returned the case to the district court for a decision on the current DACA policy;

WHEREAS, the U.S. district court heard oral arguments on DACA on June 1, 2023, and a decision is expected soon;

WHEREAS, since the federal courts have barred new applications for DACA, there are now hundreds of thousands of additional undocumented immigrants whose dreams for the future are in jeopardy;

WHEREAS, an ultimate court decision that DACA is illegal would disrupt the lives of millions of DACA recipients and family members,

WHEREAS, only Congress can provide a pathway to permanent residence for DACA recipients;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Unitarian Universalist Association supports the Dreamers and believes that they are valued members of our communities, as are other immigrant populations;

That the UUA calls on Congress to expeditiously pass legislation to provide Dreamers with a pathway to permanent residence;

That the UUA encourages its members to support the Dreamers in their communities and to communicate with their members of Congress to urge them to support legislation protecting the Dreamers;

That the UUA will be vocal and forward-leaning in its work to encourage members to deepen our theological grounding in issues of immigration justice; collaborate with local partners to combat anti-immigrant narratives, including those by state legislatures, and work with grassroots organizations/campaigns centering on those most directly affected by anti-immigration policies and other failures of the U.S. immigration system.