

On Anniversary of DACA, Migration Chairman Reaffirms Need for Congress to Act

WASHINGTON—Today marks nine years since Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was created. DACA allows certain undocumented immigrants who entered the United States as children — known as Dreamers — to remain in the country, subject to several requirements. DACA does not provide legal status, nor does it create a pathway to citizenship, but it does make recipients eligible for work authorization and other benefits. There are over 600,000 active DACA recipients currently living in the United States and as many as 3.6 million Dreamers total, about 1.8 million of which are DACA-eligible.

In recognition of DACA's anniversary, Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville, auxiliary bishop of Washington and chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration, issued the following statement:

“Every day, DACA recipients make important contributions to their communities and the life of our nation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, over 200,000 DACA recipients have served as essential workers, and they continue to demonstrate their resolve during this period of recovery. Yet, these young people have far too often faced uncertainty and rejection at the hands of our broken immigration system.

“The Biden Administration has identified immigration reform as a priority, and we look forward to seeing it realize that commitment through congressional engagement. Meanwhile, the ideal time for Congress to act has long since passed, though the opportunity and imperative still remain. Dreamers — together with Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Enforced Departure holders, migrant agricultural workers, and undocumented essential workers — deserve relief.

“As a Church, we recognize the inherent, God-given dignity of every human person, regardless of immigration status. Therefore, we will continue to call for comprehensive immigration reform that preserves family unity, honors due process, respects the rule of law, recognizes the contributions of foreign-born workers, defends the vulnerable, and addresses the root causes of migration, consistent with the common good.”

Congress currently has multiple opportunities before it to enact immigration reform, including the American Dream and Promise Act (H.R. 6) and the Farm Workforce Modernization Act (H.R. 1603), bipartisan bills passed by the House of Representatives in March. Bishop Dorsonville submitted written testimony for a hearing held today by the Senate Judiciary Committee on the American Dream and Promise Act. This follows a statement issued in March by Bishop Dorsonville and Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the USCCB, urging the Senate to act.