

Week # 4.

What is DACA? Why is it important?

This week, the (Insert Name of Parish/Institution) Circle of Support continues its series of articles on immigration, focusing this time on the program called the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA. This program was introduced by the Obama Administration because Congress failed to enact meaningful immigration legislation and hundreds of thousands of young people in this country who had been brought here as minors were in jeopardy of deportation. The goal of the DACA program was to provide protections for minor children who were brought to this country illegally by their parents. The attached article provides a brief look at this program and the serious potential consequences for tens of thousands of young people if this program were to be overturned in the future.

Because Congress failed to enact immigration legislation, the Obama Administration implemented the **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)** program in 2012. This policy sought to protect undocumented immigrants who were brought to this country as minors. Under this policy, they were provided with work authorization and protection from deportation. The Trump Administration attempted to end DACA on September 5, 2017. On June 18, 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling that at least temporarily prevented the former Administration from ending this program. “Dreamers” is an older term coined in 2001 to refer broadly to *all* undocumented immigrants brought to this country as minors.

It is important to note that while the Supreme Court’s ruling protected the DACA program temporarily, it is essential that Congress pass legislation that will provide more permanent protection to DACA and Dreamer individuals. Revised immigration laws could help protect and liberate DACA individuals, and stabilize families, communities and local economies across the country.

There is a glimmer of hope. On his first day in office on January 20, 2021, President Biden “proposed an immigration bill that features a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants and makes Dreamers — young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children — immediately eligible for green cards,” announced the online publication “Inside Higher Ed.” In addition, the site noted that President Biden signed a memorandum directing the Secretary of Homeland Security to take actions aimed at “preserving and fortifying” the DACA program.

The following are helpful facts to know about the DACA program:

- According to the Immigration Forum, as of December 11, 2020, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reports there are 643,560 current DACA recipients with the Center for Migration Studies estimating another 61,000 Dreamers are aging into DACA eligibility.
- DACA recipients are generally enrolled in school or contribute to the labor force, many of whom are considered “essential” workers.
- If the DACA program were to be terminated, the country would suffer tremendous economic losses, with tens of thousands of educated and employed tax-paying individuals being forced to leave this country — the only country they have ever known. The resulting devastation on these individuals and their families would be incalculable.

Catholic Social Teaching tells us that it is our ‘duty to welcome the foreigner out of charity and respect for the dignity and rights of the human person.’ Through our ‘Campaign for Hospitality,’ the Ignatian

Solidarity Network joins Pope Francis, as well as our Jesuit and other Catholic partners in creating a culture that seeks to welcome, protect and integrate immigrant persons into our communities.

Ignatian Solidarity Network. Announcement of its "Campaign for Hospitality."

<https://ignatiansolidarity.net/migration/>

What can we do?

As concerned Catholics following the social teachings of the Church, we are called to support our DACA brothers and sisters who are residents of the U.S. and live and work in our own communities. We can do this through prayer, standing in solidarity, and by advocating.

Please visit the following websites to learn more about what you can do to advocate for immigrant justice:

<https://justiceforimmigrants.org/what-are-we-working-on/immigration/daca-resource-page/>

<https://ignatiansolidarity.net/migration/>

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Dear friend of mine who has raised her the issue and of