

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

July 26, 2017

The Honorable John F. Kelly
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Kelly,

We write to express grave concerns with reports that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may not defend Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program in court because you have determined it will not survive a legal challenge.^[1] We urge you to continue to zealously defend the DACA program, which is vital to thousands of young people in Connecticut, against any legal challenge, and we urge you to use your enforcement discretion to renew deferments of deportation for DACA recipients and to accept new DACA applications.


We understand that 10 Attorneys General from Texas, Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia, as well as the Governor of Idaho, have threatened to sue the federal government if the DACA program is not phased out by September 5. However, these are the same states that sued regarding the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA) program, but previously elected not to challenge the DACA program. Their legal arguments have not suddenly gotten stronger with time. Instead, they are relying on you to back down. We request that you fight this threat.

Moreover, any action by you to stop or suspend the DACA program will drastically disrupt and harm the lives of more than 780,000 young immigrants nationwide, including more than 10,000 young men and women who reside in Connecticut. These DACA recipients were brought to the United States as minor children, know no other country and identify as Americans. They willingly comply with the rigorous program eligibility and information disclosure requirements to fulfill their dreams of actively contributing to their communities without fear of deportation. In fact, the DACA recipients from Connecticut, who we have had the pleasure of getting to know, are graduating from high schools, working to support themselves as they earn degrees from colleges and universities in the state, and gaining professional work experience in diverse fields, such as, engineering, nursing, medicine, teaching, software development, law enforcement and business management. We agree with you that these are the very types of people who “should not be prioritized for deportation” and who “fall into the

category of people who should stay in the U.S.”^[2] Accordingly, we strongly urge you to exercise your enforcement discretion to protect these DACA recipients and applicants.

We have witnessed how much DACA visa holders contribute to Connecticut’s vibrancy, strength and economy. They are part of what makes this state great. Like the more than 90 colleges and universities, including all 17 of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities,^[3] we strongly support and value the DACA program. Therefore, we request that you continue the program and work with us to advance legislation to protect this population.

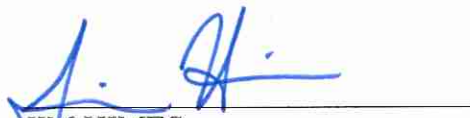
Sincerely,


RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate


CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
United States Senate


ROSA L. DeLAURO
Member of Congress


JOHN B. LARSON
Member of Congress


JIM HIMES
Member of Congress


JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress


ELIZABETH H. ESTY
Member of Congress

^[1] Maria Sacchetti, *DHS’ Kelly: Program Shielding 800,000 illegal immigrants may be in jeopardy*, The Washington Post (July 12, 2017), https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/dhss-kelly-tells-hispanic-caucus-daca-might-not-survive-court-challenge/2017/07/12/b1f19686-672b-11e7-9928-22d00a47778f_story.html?utm_term=.c267c651df33.

[2] Johnathan Blitzer, *Republican States want the Trump White House to Stop Protecting Dreamers*, The New Yorker (July 15, 2017), <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/republican-states-want-the-trump-white-house-to-stop-protecting-dreamers>.

[3] *Letter from President Ojakian and all CSU Presidents to White House Requesting Support for DACA*, CSU (April 17, 2017), http://www.ct.edu/newsroom/letter_from_president_ojakian_and_all_cscu_presidents_to_white_house_reques; Elizabeth Redden, *In Defense of DACA*, Inside Higher Ed (November 21, 2016), <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/11/21/college-presidents-call-continuation-obama-administration-program-protecting>.