

Durbin calls on Senate colleagues to support Bridge Act to protect DREAMers

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today spoke on the Senate floor about new bipartisan legislation to ensure that the young undocumented immigrants known as DREAMers remain shielded from deportation under a Trump Administration. Like Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the *Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy (BRIDGE) Act* would provide temporary relief from deportation and work authorization to young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children.

“If DACA is eliminated, what happens to ? That’s been a concern and a fear, not just on this side of aisle, but on the other side as well. I’m happy to report that Senator Lindsey

Graham has stepped forward. We're working together on a measure we call the BRIDGE Act, which we are going to introduce today," said Senator Durbin. "This is an effort by Senator Graham and myself to have a bipartisan answer to the question about what happens to these 800,000 and others like them while we debate the future of immigration."

The BRIDGE Act would provide "provisional protected presence" and employment authorization to DACA-eligible individuals. A current DACA recipient would receive provisional protected status until the expiration date of his or her DACA status and could apply for provisional protected presence prior to this expiration. An individual who is not a DACA recipient but who is eligible for DACA could also apply for provisional protected presence. Applicants would be required to pay a reasonable fee, be subject to criminal background checks, and meet a number of eligibility criteria indicating that they came to the United States as minors, grew up in this country, have pursued an education, have not committed any serious crimes, and do not pose a threat to our country.

Senator Durbin has been a leading voice in the fight to protect young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children. In April 2010, he was the first member of Congress to call for the establishment of DACA. Durbin has shared the stories of more than 75 DREAMers on the Senate floor since he introduced the original DREAM Act fifteen years ago. He was also a member of the "Gang of 8" Republicans and Democrats who authored comprehensive immigration legislation that passed the Senate in 2013.