

Graham, Durbin reintroduce Bridge Act to protect undocumented youth from deportation

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Reps. Coffman and Gutiérrez introduce companion bill in House of Representatives

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) today reintroduced bipartisan legislation to protect undocumented young people brought to the United States as children should the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

(DACA) program be discontinued under the next Administration. The *Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy (BRIDGE) Act*, which was first introduced in the Senate late last year, would provide temporary relief from deportation and work authorization to undocumented youth. U.S. Representatives Mike Coffman (CO-06) and Luis V. Gutiérrez (IL-04) are introducing companion legislation in the House of Representatives.

“It’s my firm belief most Americans want to fix a broken immigration system in a humane manner,” said Graham. “In my view, the DACA Executive Order issued by President Obama was unconstitutional and President-elect Trump would be right to repeal it. However, I do not believe we should pull the rug out and push these young men and women -- who came out of the shadows and registered with the federal government -- back into the darkness. Our legislation continues to provide legal status to them for three years as Congress seeks a permanent solution. These young people have much to offer the country and we stand to benefit from the many contributions they will make to America. I’m confident that if President-elect Trump were to support this measure we can repeal the unconstitutional Executive Order and Congress will provide temporary legal status through the proper constitutional process.”

“For over a decade, I’ve come to the Senate floor to share with my colleagues and the American people the stories of talented young undocumented immigrants, who have overcome the odds to give back to the only country they call home. Since the establishment of DACA, we’ve witnessed them realize their full potential - by opening businesses, becoming doctors and teachers, and serving our country in uniform. We cannot squander that talent and dedication and send them back to countries they barely know,” said Durbin. “The BRIDGE Act is an opportunity for supporters and critics of DACA to come together and address a compelling humanitarian issue on a bipartisan basis. I’m honored to work with Senator Graham, Congressmen Coffman and Gutiérrez, and other colleagues to ensure that DREAMers are protected from deportation until Congress is able to pass comprehensive immigration reform.”

“Today’s introduction of the Bridge Act is only a first step in the long process of permanently reforming and strengthening our immigration laws,” said Rep. Coffman. “I believe children brought here at no fault of their own merit the opportunity to live, work and study in the United States. For the balance of Immigration reform, I am optimistic that we can fix our broken immigration system by enacting tougher laws, securing our borders, and implementing stricter enforcement, all while still keeping families together”.

“We need to do whatever we can to protect DACA recipients who are already working on-the-books and not move backward to strip them of legal status,” Rep. Gutiérrez said. “These young people are a lifeline for their families and leaders in our communities. We are starting with them, but I remain concerned about the millions of other immigrants who have no clear path to legal status and the millions who are locked out of legal immigration because our system is so out-of-date and backlogged. The DREAMers who have DACA are not competing with Americans for a slice of the pie, they are helping to bake a bigger pie for our country and our economy.”

U.S. Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Jeff Flake (R-AZ), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), and Kamala Harris (D-CA) are original cosponsors of the Senate version of the BRIDGE Act. U.S. Representatives Jeff Denham (R-CA), Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), Carlos L. Curbelo (R-FL), Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), and Judy Chu (D-CA) are original cosponsors of the House version of the BRIDGE Act.

The BRIDGE Act has broad support from the faith, business, higher-education, civil rights, and immigrant communities. This week, [88 business leaders from around the country sent a letter](#) to President-elect Donald Trump and House and Senate leadership asking them to support the BRIDGE Act.

Find out more about the BRIDGE Act [here](#).