



Durbin delivers weekly address

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WASHINGTON—Following last week's announcement that the Trump Administration will end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) delivers the Weekly Democratic Address, calling on Republican leaders of the Senate and House to bring the bipartisan Dream Act to the

floor. Durbin first introduced the Dream Act in 2001, and most recently introduced the bill in July with U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC).



Durbin's remarks as prepared for delivery:

“Last week, we were dealt the heartbreaking news that the Trump Administration will end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, better known as ‘DACA.’

DACA provides temporary legal status to immigrant students if they register with the government, pay a fee, and pass criminal and national security background checks.

The young people protected by DACA are known as Dreamers. They came to the United States as children. They grew up singing the Star Spangled Banner and pledging allegiance to the American flag.

It was seven years ago that Republican Senator Dick Lugar and I sent a letter to President Obama, asking him to establish the DACA program.

The President responded to our request, and DACA has been a huge success. Approximately 800,000 Dreamers have come forward and received DACA, which has allowed them to contribute more fully to their country as teachers, nurses, engineers, first responders, and service members.

But today, across the nation, thousands of Dreamers – and their families and friends – are afraid. Because of this Administration’s decision to end DACA, 800,000 young people who were brought to the United States as children will lose their ability to work and be subject to deportation. Ending DACA will set in motion rolling mass deportations over the course of more than two years.

Don’t believe the spin—repealing DACA was never about ‘putting America first’ or ‘protecting American workers’. Dreamers grew up in this country and are American in every way except their immigration status. They are job creators, not job stealers. A study by the Center for American Progress finds that ending DACA would cost the United States at least \$433.4 billion in gross domestic product over the next 10 years.

The President says that it’s up to Congress to fix this, and he gave us six months to do it. Congress now has an urgent and closing window to right this wrong and prevent a humanitarian and economic catastrophe for these young people, their families, their communities, and for our country. The deportation clock is ticking.

It was sixteen years ago that I first introduced the Dream Act. This bipartisan legislation would give a path to citizenship to Dreamers. In July, I introduced the most recent version of the Dream Act with my friend Lindsey Graham, Republican of South Carolina. This bipartisan bill has also been introduced in the House of Representatives.

We are calling on the Republican leaders of the Senate and the House—Senator McConnell and Speaker Ryan—to bring the bipartisan Dream Act to the floor. If they do, I'm confident that the Dream Act will pass both chambers of Congress on a strong bipartisan vote and then it will be up to President Trump to sign the Dream Act and make it the law of the land.

When we introduced the Dream Act, Senator Graham said, 'the moment of reckoning is coming.'

Well, that moment has come.

The American people are calling out for this. Seventy-five percent of Americans—including 70 percent of Republicans—want the Dreamers to stay in this country they call home.

It's time to stand up. It's time for Congress to pass the Dream Act.

Those members of Congress on the wrong side of history will bear responsibility for forcing hundreds of thousands of talented young immigrants out of the workforce and putting them at risk of immediate deportation.

As for this United States Senator, I'll do everything in my power to protect these Dreamers and give them the chance to become citizens so they can contribute to a brighter future for all Americans.

My final message is for all the Dreamers out there who are in despair: do not lose faith. Keep going to work. Keep working for your families, your communities, and your country.

You are not alone. I won't stop fighting for you, and together, with my colleagues in Congress and our fellow Americans, we will ensure that you are here to stay."