

Durbin Leads 43 Senate Democrats In Calling On President Trump To Protect Dreamers After Supreme Court DACA Decision

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Durbin, Senators call on President Trump to end his cruel attempts to deport DACA recipients

WASHINGTON — Following yesterday's historic Supreme Court ruling rejecting President Donald Trump's repeal of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Ranking Member of the Senate Judiciary Immigration Subcommittee, led 43 of his Senate Democratic colleagues in a letter to President Trump urging him to finally end his cruel attempts to deport DACA recipients, who are commonly known as Dreamers.

“As the Supreme Court has recognized, it is well within your executive authority to protect Dreamers. By contrast, going ahead with your Administration’s efforts to deport DACA recipients would be needlessly cruel and would weaken our nation’s essential workforce,” the Senators wrote to President Trump. “Only Congress can provide a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, but it is up to you whether to use your Administration’s authority to allow these young immigrants who have benefitted America in countless ways to continue contributing to our nation, or to continue your efforts to deport them.”

Today, President Trump [tweeted](#), “I have wanted to take care of DACA recipients better than the Do Nothing Democrats, but for two years they refused to negotiate.” In fact, the President has rejected numerous bipartisan deals to protect Dreamers. For example, on January 11, 2018, in a meeting in the Oval Office, he rejected a bipartisan immigration agreement that included protection for Dreamers. On February 15, 2018, the Senate considered a bipartisan amendment offered by Senators Mike Rounds (R-SD) and Angus King (I-ME), which included a path to citizenship for Dreamers. A bipartisan majority supported the amendment, but it failed to reach the 60 votes needed to pass because the Trump Administration issued a statement of opposition. On the same day, the Senate rejected the President’s immigration proposal by a bipartisan supermajority of 39-60.

In their letter to President Trump, the Senators also noted that in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 200,000 DACA recipients are working in occupational areas that the Trump Administration’s Department of Homeland Security (DHS) identifies as part of the “essential critical infrastructure workforce.” This includes an estimated 41,700 DACA recipients working in the health care industry, including physicians and physicians in training, intensive care nurses, paramedics, respiratory therapists, nursing assistants, and health technicians.

Durbin first introduced the *Dream Act* nineteen years ago. Last year, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Durbin [introduced](#) the *Dream Act of 2019*. The *Dream Act* was also included in the 2013 comprehensive immigration reform bill that Durbin and Graham coauthored as part of the “Gang of Eight” – four Democrats and four Republicans. The 2013 bill passed the Senate on a strong bipartisan vote of 68-32, but the Republican leadership of the House of Representatives refused to consider it.

Along with Durbin, today’s letter was also signed by Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Patty Murray (D-WA), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Jack Reed (D-RI), Tom Carper (D-DE), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Bob Casey (D-PA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Tom Udall (D-NM), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Mark Warner (D-

VA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Chris Coons (D-DE), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Angus King (I-ME), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Ed Markey (D-MA), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Tina Smith (D-MN), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), and Doug Jones (D-AL).

Full text of today's letter to President Trump is available [here](#) and below:

June 19, 2020

Dear President Trump:

Following the Supreme Court's landmark decision on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), today you tweeted, "We will be submitting enhanced papers shortly in order to properly fulfil the Supreme Court's ruling & request of yesterday" We strongly urge you to change course and use your executive authority to protect, not deport, the young immigrants who are eligible for DACA.

Eight years ago, following bipartisan requests from Congress, President Obama used his legal authority to establish DACA. DACA provides temporary protection from deportation on an individualized basis to immigrants who arrived in the United States as children if they register with the government, pay a fee, and pass criminal and national security background checks. The young people who are eligible for DACA, known as Dreamers, are American in every way except for their immigration status. More than 800,000 Dreamers have come forward and received DACA. DACA has been vital for Dreamers, who are contributing to our country as soldiers, nurses, teachers, and small business owners, and in many other ways.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 200,000 DACA recipients are working in occupational areas that your Administration's Department of Homeland Security (DHS) identifies as part of the "essential critical infrastructure workforce." This includes an estimated 41,700 DACA recipients working in the health care industry, including physicians and physicians in training, intensive care nurses, paramedics, respiratory therapists, nursing assistants, and health technicians. It makes no sense to continue your efforts to deport these essential workers to countries they barely remember even as our nation grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic.

When you announced your repeal of DACA, you called on Congress to "legalize DACA," and today you tweeted, "I have wanted to take care of DACA recipients better than the Do Nothing Democrats, but for two years they refused to negotiate." In fact,

you have rejected numerous bipartisan deals to protect Dreamers. For example, on January 11, 2018, in a meeting in the Oval Office, you rejected a bipartisan immigration agreement that included protection for Dreamers. On February 15, 2018, the Senate considered a bipartisan amendment offered by Senators Mike Rounds (R-SD) and Angus King (I-ME) which included a path to citizenship for Dreamers. A bipartisan majority supported the amendment, but it failed to reach the 60 votes needed to pass because your Administration issued a statement of opposition. On the same day, the Senate rejected your immigration proposal by a bipartisan supermajority of 39-60.

On June 4, 2019, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 6, the American Dream and Promise Act, legislation that would give Dreamers a path to citizenship, on a strong bipartisan vote of 237-187. The American Dream and Promise Act has now been pending in the Senate for more than a year.

Mr. President, it is not too late for you to do the right thing. Specifically, we call on you to immediately:

1. Publicly announce that you will not make another attempt to repeal DACA;
2. Direct DHS to reopen DACA to eligible individuals who have been unable to apply due to your decision to terminate DACA; and
3. Endorse the American Dream and Promise Act, which would pass the Senate on a strong bipartisan vote if you simply called on Leader McConnell to bring it to a vote.

As the Supreme Court has recognized, it is well within your executive authority to protect Dreamers. By contrast, going ahead with your Administration's efforts to deport DACA recipients would be needlessly cruel and would weaken our nation's essential workforce. Only Congress can provide a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, but it is up to you whether to use your Administration's authority to allow these young immigrants who have benefitted America in countless ways to continue contributing to our nation, or to continue your efforts to deport them.

It would be an American tragedy to deport DACA recipients who are saving lives in the midst of this pandemic. We must ensure these talented young immigrants are not forced to stop working when the need for their public service has never been greater. And we must give them the chance they deserve to become American citizens.

We, and hundreds of thousands of Dreamers, await your response.

Sincerely,

Sen. Dick Durbin

