



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

Sep. 13, 2017

U.S. Senate

Washington, DC

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sponsors, and related organizations, I am writing to express our concern and support for the nearly 800,000 young immigrants currently protected by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Given the recent Administration decision to end the program, we hope you will join us in supporting The DREAM Act of 2017, bipartisan legislation introduced by Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Dick Durbin (D-IL).

As an organization guided by the social teachings of the Catholic Church, CHA affirms that each person is created in the image of God, and that each human life is sacred and possesses inalienable worth. In their 2003 pastoral letter on immigration *Strangers No Longer*, the bishops of the United States stated that regardless of their legal status, immigrants, like all persons, possess inherent human dignity which should be respected. While we call on our fellow Americans to respect that dignity within every single immigrant, we also should be particularly mindful of those who were brought to this country as children and have known no other home. These employees, students and members of the military have become a part of the fabric of our nation.

The bipartisan DREAM Act of 2017 (S. 1615) would offer much-needed protections to these young people, some of whom serve in our health care facilities as nurses, physicians, aides, dietary workers and facility professionals. The bill would offer conditional permanent resident



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status to qualifying immigrant youth who, among other requirements, entered the U.S. as children, have been continuously present in the country for at least four years prior to enactment of the bill and who meet certain admissibility and security requirements. S.1615 also allows recipients of this conditional status to obtain non-conditional lawful permanent residency if they satisfy requirements that include background checks, demonstrated English proficiency and either education in a higher learning institution; honorable military service; three years of employment in the U. S.; or a hardship exception.

Catholic health providers have seen first-hand how the “Dreamers” under the DACA program have benefitted their organizations, and how thousands of others have contributed to their schools, churches, communities and the economy at large. They deserve better than to live in constant fear and uncertainty. We urge you to support The DREAM Act and to ask Senate leadership to bring up this vitally important legislation as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Carol Keehan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sr. Carol Keehan, DC
President and CEO