



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Support for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Youth

Catholic Charities of the East Bay opposes efforts to weaken or dismantle the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program. We stand in solidarity with our immigrant community and DACA youth. DACA provides young people who entered our country as children the chance to step out of the shadows and live, work, and pursue education with legal protection. This benefits us all. These young Californians are active members of our communities, our schools, our churches. They are bright, talented, and willing to do what it takes to make a positive difference in our world. The fact that they have registered for DACA and seek any means possible to achieve legal status speaks to their character. Despite the uncertainty of their future and the obstacles presented by a broken immigration system, 97% are actively employed or in school.

Young DACA recipients who have been able to visit their country of origin speak of being in a place that treats them as strangers. Their accents give them away as not native raised. The USA offers a home and a culture -- but in limbo. Still, they rise and thrive in a country whose leadership threatens imminent actions against them and their families.

DACA protects nearly 800,000 young people, but it does not provide a path to permanent residency or citizenship. However, it has released the potential of these young people by relieving the fear of immediate deportation. As a result, we've seen people further their education, start small businesses, and become fully integral members of our communities. Imagine the untapped capacity of other immigrants living in the shadows. Immigration has been the fuel to our success as a nation from our earliest beginnings. With the exception of people with native indigenous ancestry, immigration is the heritage of every citizen.

We urge Congress to do the work necessary to enact comprehensive and compassionate immigration reform that addresses the needs of DACA youth and other contributing members of our society. We believe that immigration reform is needed to achieve reasonable remedies and clear paths for people seeking legal status or family reunification in the United States.

Catholic Charities and other faith communities have a long history of welcoming newcomers, who enliven our heritage and contribute to the vigor and success of our nation, many achieving the highest levels of leadership in a diversity of fields. This is the foundation of America's greatness.

DACA has the unwavering support of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and faith communities across the nation.