

January 18, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
1233 Longworth House Building Office
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
233 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan, and Leader Pelosi:

As organizations committed to protecting the health and dignity of all people, including youth, immigrants, refugees, and their families, we urge Congress to pass a clean Dream Act by January 19th, as part of any deal to fund the government. It is inhumane that Congress left for the holidays in December and did not secure the futures of the nearly 800,000 Dreamers who continue to live in fear of deportation. While we were heartened by the recent decision by a federal judge to temporarily stop the Trump administration from eliminating the DACA program, this is not a lasting solution. Congress must act now to pass the Dream Act to give permanent relief to the thousands of Dreamers and their families.

The Trump Administration's rescission of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program is an attack on immigrant youth and families. The necessity of a clean Dream Act is a reproductive justice issue. The reproductive justice movement recognizes the right to have a child, the right to not have a child, and the right to parent the children we have in safe environments with dignity. The very essence of reproductive justice is threatened when DACA beneficiaries lose status. DACA status allows undocumented young people to seek reproductive health care without fear of deportation and keeps families intact.

Over 800,000 people, primarily from Mexico, Guatemala, South Korea, El Salvador, and Honduras, have benefitted from the DACA program. On average, more than 122 young people are losing their DACA status each day, currently totaling over 16,000 recipients whose DACA protections have been stripped away since the Trump Administration announced the program's termination.¹

In losing DACA status, recipients lose work authorization and, often, the ability to pursue higher education, both of which are crucial to meaningful participation in society. One quarter of DACA

¹ Tom Jawetz & Nicole Prchal Svajlenka, *Thousands of DACA Recipients Are Already Losing Their Protection From Deportation*, Center for American Progress (Nov. 9, 2017), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2017/11/09/442502/thousands-daca-recipient-s-already-losing-protection-deportation/>.

recipients are parents and many are their family's primary financial provider.² For many, the loss of work authorization means struggling to provide for their young families and losing access to health insurance. Without health insurance and with the threat of deportation looming, undocumented young people in need of reproductive health care, abortion care especially, may not seek necessary medical attention.³

The elimination of DACA protection destabilizes families by creating uncertainty of immigration status and fear of deportation, leaving many with the possibility of being taken away from their children and spouses.⁴ No family member--regardless of their immigration status or how they arrived in the United States--deserves to be separated from their loved ones.

As people lose DACA status, there is greater fear in seeking health care. Queer undocumented folks may not seek health care for fear of deportation to a country where they have few legal rights and face violence simply because of who they are.⁵ Undocumented survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence would be less likely to report their assaults for fear of deportation.⁶ Families must feel safe to take their children to school, attend their church, or even go grocery shopping without the possibility of deportation at every turn.

The Dream Act is a crucial first step in ensuring these protections for immigrants in the United States. But it cannot come at the cost of increased border militarization, interior enforcement, or cuts to any immigration categories. We cannot ask immigrants who came here as children to point the finger at their parents and families in exchange for protection from deportation, further destabilizing families.⁷ A clean Dream Act is one that does not implement changes to family-based visas and petitions, further restrict immigrant access to health care, tighten border

² Kisha Bird, *5 Things You Should Know About DACA Youth, the Trump Administration, and Congress*, Center for Law and Social Policy (Oct. 19, 2017), *available at* <https://www.clasp.org/blog/5-things-you-should-know-about-daca-youth-trump-administration-and-congress>.

³ Tina Vasquez, *For Undocumented People Seeking Health Care, 'The Barriers Can Seem Endless'*, Rewire (Mar. 22, 2016), *available at* <https://rewire.news/article/2016/03/22/undocumented-health-care-barriers-endless/><https://rewire.news/article/2016/03/22/undocumented-health-care-barriers-endless/>.

⁴ Lelia Schochet, *Trump's Immigration Policies Are Harming American Children*, Center for American Progress (July 31, 2017), *available at* <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2017/07/31/436377/trumps-immigration-policies-harming-american-children/>.

⁵ Sharita Gruberg, *What Ending DACA Means for LGBTQ Dreamers*, Center for American Progress (Oct. 11, 2017), *available at* <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2017/10/11/440450/ending-daca-means-lgbtq-dreamers/>.

⁶ Jennifer Medina, *Too Scared to Report Sexual Abuse. The Fear: Deportation*, *The New York Times* (April 30, 2017), *available at* https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/30/us/immigrants-deportation-sexual-abuse.html?mcubz=3&_r=0.

⁷ See Jose Antonio Vargas, *The Myth of the 'Acceptable Immigrant' is Tearing Families Apart*, *NBC News* (Nov. 16, 2017), *available at* <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/myth-acceptable-immigrant-tearing-families-apart-ncna821006>.

security such as building a border wall, or fund deportation agents in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Enforcement mechanisms such as these increase detention and deportation and tear families apart, which runs contrary to reproductive justice values.

A core tenet of reproductive justice is the ability to raise a family without fear or violence, and creating a path to citizenship for Dream-eligible youth and undocumented individuals eliminates the fear of detention and deportation and keeps families together. Moreover, the threat of deportation negatively affects immigrants' economic stability, employment, and reproductive choices. Congress must pass a clean Dream Act by January 19th so that Dreamers and their families can live, without fear. Failure to do so would be cruel and immoral.

Sincerely,

In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity

A Better Balance
Access Reproductive Care-Southeast
ACCESS Women's Health Justice
Advocates for Youth
American Civil Liberties Union
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian American Psychological Association
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Black Women for Wellness
Black Women's Health Imperative
California Coalition for Reproductive Freedom
California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
Center for Popular Democracy
Center for Reproductive Rights
Center on Reproductive Rights and Justice at UC Berkeley
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Chicago Abortion Fund
Citizens for Choice
Civil Liberties & Public Policy Program at Hampshire College
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
Community Clinic Consortium of Contra Costa and Solano
Desiree Alliance
Eastern Massachusetts Abortion Fund

Equality California
Forward Together
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality
Hispanic Federation
Ibis Reproductive Health
If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice
Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health
Illinois National Organization for Women
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health
Japanese American Citizens League
Lady Parts Justice League
Laotian American National Alliance
Latino Physicians of California
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
League of United Latin American Citizens
League of Women Voters of the United States
Legal Voice
MANA, A National Latina Organization
Medical Students for Choice
Mi Familia Vota
Midwest Access Coalition
NAPW
NARAL Pro-Choice America
NARAL Pro-Choice Texas
National Abortion Federation
National Action Network
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (CAPACD)
National Coalition for LGBT Health
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Jewish Women, Los Angeles Section
National Health Law Program
National Institute for Reproductive Health
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National Latina/o Psychological Association
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Health Network

National Women's Law Center
Neta
New Orleans Abortion Fund
New Voices for Reproductive Justice
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates
Ohio NOW
Ohio NOW Education and Legal Fund
Ohio Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Our Justice
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Ohio
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Positive Women's Network - USA
Preterm
Pride Action Tank
Pride at Work
Public Leadership Institute
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)
SIA Legal Team
SisterLove, Inc.
SisterReach
SisterSong: National Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Staten Island Women who March
SWOP BEHIND BARS
The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs
undocuJersey
Western States Center
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center
Women With A Vision, Inc
Women's Law Project
Women's Rights & Empowerment Network
WV FREE