



City of Everett
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OP-ED

Monday, September 11, 2017

A CALL UPON CONGRESS TO ACT ON DACA

By: Mayor Carlo DeMaria

Last week the president rescinded the DACA, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, program created by executive order in 2012 and called upon Congress to act within 6 months to pass legislation instead. If Congress does not enact legislation within that timeframe, deportations of young people previously registered through DACA may begin.

I join hundreds of elected officials, without regard to political party or belief, in calling on Congress to act quickly. Immigration reform is long overdue. And the 800,000 young people across the country registered through the DACA program, 8,000 of whom reside here in Massachusetts, now face uncertain futures. These young people arrived here as children and grew up in the United States, and through the program, have registered with the government, passed background and biometrics checks, received state identification cards and in some cases drivers licenses, enrolled in college, held jobs and paid taxes, and even purchased homes. Several hundred of them even enlisted in the military through a 2014 program of the Department of Defense, designed to recruit those with specialized skills- like fluency in critical foreign languages.

Every two years, the DACA program required them to re-apply and pay a \$495 fee for a work permit and a two-year deportation stay. It required them to be enrolled in school, or have already completed school. It did not provide amnesty or a path to citizenship. They cannot vote. They cannot receive any federal benefits, like Social Security payments, food stamps, or college financial aid.

Beyond consequences for the young people themselves, there are real consequences for our economy if this program is not acted upon by Congress quickly as part of immigration reform. As a group, they contribute about \$1.2 billion annually in tax revenue, and a study by the Center for American Progress found that the loss of DACA workers would reduce the country's GDP by a staggering \$433 billion over the next decade.

For all of these reasons, I call upon Congress to act swiftly to craft bipartisan, sensible legislation that will allow the benefits of the DACA program to continue.

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