



Legislative Brief

January 23, 2018

TELL CONGRESS TO PASS CHIP AND DACA NOW!

Congress' first priority was to send healthy tax cuts to their wealthy voters and corporate owners. Meanwhile, they ignored two legislative issues where both political parties agreed need to be implemented.

One very important program needing immediate funding is the Children's Health Insurance Program known as CHIP, that provides affordable health coverage for almost 9 million children in families who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but still have relatively modest incomes; regular federal funding for that program expired at the end of September.

The other program is Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival, or DACA, under which the Obama Administration had protected from deportation some 800,000 'illegal immigrants' brought to America as children. In September, President Trump said that he was bringing DACA to an end. He claimed disingenuously, that he didn't have the legal authority to decide not to deport the so-called "Dreamers" without explicit Congressional approval, although he has also said they will defer action for 6 months to give Congress the time to act to protect the "Dreamers" if it wants.

The stop-gap funding measure passed just before Christmas does avert the immediate crisis for CHIP. Otherwise, according to the Kaiser Foundation family, 16 states would have run out of funding for their CHIP programs in January, with another 21 arriving at that point in February and March

DACA isn't quite as pressing because as Trump himself said, he would revisit the issue. Numerous Senators have said that there is partisan support for both issues.

However, President Trump has said and tweeted in recent days that he won't do a DACA deal without funds for a wall he repeatedly claimed Mexico would pay for during the campaign. Mexico has refused. The President was asking for \$18 billion for the wall, but has lowered this estimate. The length of the wall is strongly opposed by many members of Congress from both political parties.

Republicans have claimed for months that they would find solutions on both Chip and DACA. If they don't, voters will likely seek new Congress persons in the 2018 election.

"Whoever welcomes one such child
In my name welcomes me.
If any of you put a stumbling block
before one of these little ones who
believe in me, it would be better for
you if a great millstone were fastened
around your neck and you were
drowned in the depth of the sea."

(Matthew 18:5- 6 NRSV)

DACA stands for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival. Most of these children have been here all of their lives. They love this country for what it means to be free and to decide for yourself what path in life you choose to follow. America adopted them, and parents don't turn their back on their children.

IDENTIFICATION STATEMENT

Date: January 23, 2018 Monthly

Published By:

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Issue: #1-2018

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President Trump announced that he would end DACA in early March. More than 7,000 young immigrants already have lost DACA protection since Trump acted in September, according to the Center For American Progress in Washington D.C.

Trump said “Chain Migration is a total disaster which threatens our security and our economy and provides a gateway for terrorism.” He is referring to the current system that allows many immigrants to sponsor their extended family members.

A bipartisan coalition of Governors, including Ohio’s John Kasich, planned to quickly move to allow foreign-born “Dreamers” to remain in the United States. The “Dreamers’ fate will be decided early in 2018.

Arizona Republican Senator Jeff Flake has received assurance from Majority Leader Mitch McConnell R-KY, indicating that the Senate will vote in January on bi-partisan legislation addressing the DACA issue. The Migration Policy Institute estimated that 13,000 DACA eligible immigrants live in Ohio. This is not a theoretical peril, but in fact an immediate and urgent one, because more than 100 young people in our cities and towns are losing their protective status every day. These are individuals who played no role in the decision to come here. They have known no other home but the USA.

“Congress has a golden opportunity to do something that is unifying and bipartisan instead of always engaging in the politics of partisanship”, responded Lynn Tramonte, Ohio’s Voices, an immigrant reform group, said polling shows a large majority of Americans support retaining DACA protections.

If Congress passes a DACA bill making them legal, Ohio would see long-term increase of approximately \$92 million a year in gross domestic products

and \$6 million a year in state and local taxes.

A committee of six Senators led by Dick Durbin of Illinois and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina agreed to stop the deportation of hundreds of thousands of young immigrants. They also included \$1.6 billion for a border security wall. President Trump said the proposal was insufficient. He further damaged hopes for the DACA proposal by his vulgar speech that downgraded the description of members from African nations and Haiti at a Whitehouse meeting. He pointed to people from Norway and Asian countries as much more desirable immigrants.

Senator John McCain from Arizona released this statement to the press. “I strongly believe that children who were illegally brought to this country through no fault of their own, should not be forced to return to a country they do not know. The 800,00 innocent young people granted deferred action under DACA over the last several years are pursuing degrees, starting careers, and contributing to our communities in important ways. While I disagree with President Obama’s unilateral action on this issue, I believe that rescinding DACA at this time is an unacceptable reversal of their promises and opportunities that have been conferred to these individuals .”

Thousands of young immigrants not only may be deported to their country of birth in the middle of the night and left without any help to find a place to live or any idea of where they can receive assistance. They also are sacrificing a 12 year path to becoming full American citizenship. They would not be able to sponsor their parents to also become citizens. Parents would qualify for three-year work permits, which could be renewed repeatedly. Let’s pass CHIP and DACA now!