

PRESIDENTS' ALLIANCE | ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND IMMIGRATION

June 2, 2026

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Room S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Room H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Room S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Room H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leaders Schumer and Jeffries:

On behalf of the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration and the undersigned higher education associations and organizations, we write to urge Congress to advance bipartisan legislative solutions that provide permanent protections for Dreamers and support their college access, degree completion, and workforce pathways.

Approximately 525,000 undocumented students are enrolled in U.S. institutions of higher education, representing 2.4 percent of all postsecondary students. The majority arrived in the country as minors and completed the bulk of their K-12 education in the United States.¹ They are enrolled across all sectors of higher education, including community colleges, public and private institutions, religious institutions, and graduate and professional programs.

Dreamers make meaningful contributions to our nation. Nearly 90 percent of Dreamers who obtained work authorization through Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) are currently employed, including many working as teachers, engineers, and healthcare providers and in other high-demand fields.² Dreamers contribute billions of dollars to the U.S. economy annually, paying an estimated \$24 billion in taxes and exercising significant spending power.³

Despite these contributions, opportunities for Dreamers remain severely restricted. Current estimates show that only 129,900 undocumented students in higher education are eligible for DACA, meaning nearly three quarters of this population remains ineligible for the program due to the June 2007 eligibility cutoff. Many arrived in the United States as children, are pursuing or have earned a college degree, and have maintained good standing, yet they remain unable to access DACA's limited protections or fully put their education to work after graduation.

¹ Higher Ed Immigration Portal. "National Data." Accessed May 26, 2026, <https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/national/national-data/>.

² FWD.us, "DACA 14 Years Later: From students to careers and families," May 12, 2026, <https://www.fwd.us/news/daca-anniversary/>.

³ FWD.us, "Dreamers by the Numbers," May 12, 2026, <https://www.fwd.us/news/dreamers-by-the-numbers/>.

Of the 75,000 undocumented students who graduate from U.S. high schools each year,⁴ none are eligible for DACA. Without a permanent legislative solution, the United States risks losing generations of talented, educated graduates ready to contribute to their communities and serve the nation.

DACA has made an enormous impact, helping recipients earn degrees, obtain family-sustaining employment, and contribute more fully to the economy. However, the program remains vulnerable to legal and administrative challenges. Recent renewal processing delays have left some recipients at risk of gaps in work authorization and employment,⁵ and reports of immigration enforcement actions affecting DACA recipients and other Dreamers further highlight the need for durable legislative solutions that protect families, institutions, and employers from unnecessary disruption.⁶

We recognize that immigration policy is a complex issue on which Americans hold a range of views. At the same time, there has long been bipartisan recognition, reflected in both public opinion and repeated congressional proposals, that Dreamers should not continue to face indefinite uncertainty.⁷ In 2024, President Trump similarly stated that he wanted to “work something out” for Dreamers, underscoring the continued need for Congress to advance a durable legislative solution.⁸ Bipartisan proposals such as the Dream Act provide Congress with the opportunity to advance pragmatic solutions that reflect shared values, economic opportunity, workforce needs, and national competitiveness.

Higher education remains committed to supporting Dreamers and other undocumented students who contribute meaningfully to campuses, local communities, and the broader American economy. We respectfully urge Congress to continue working in a bipartisan manner to provide permanent protections and stability for this population, and we welcome the opportunity to engage further with your offices.

Sincerely,



Miriam Feldblum, President and CEO

On behalf of:

⁴ Higher Ed Immigration Portal, “A Generation Threatened: Undocumented High School Students Graduate Amidst Uncertain National Climate,” February 2026, <https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/research/a-generation-threatened-undocumented-high-school-student-s-graduate-amidst-uncertain-national-climate/>.

⁵ Associated Press, “Long DACA Renewal Wait Times Leave Some ‘Dreamers’ Without Status, a Job and Fearing Detainment,” May 1, 2026, <https://apnews.com/article/daca-renewal-delays-1d81a8ba01b202f65a20206af53c23ad>.

⁶ The New York Times, “ICE Agents Detain Newlywed Spouse of Soldier Training to Deploy,” April 6, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/05/us/ice-detains-military-wife-soldier-deployment.html>.

⁷ Gallup, “Surge in U.S. Concern About Immigration Has Abated,” July 11, 2025, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/692522/surge-concern-immigration-abated.aspx>.

⁸ Associated Press, “Trump Says He Can’t Guarantee Tariffs Won’t Raise US Prices and Won’t Rule Out Revenge Prosecutions,” December 9, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/trump-immigration-tariffs-pardons-abortion-prosecutions-riot-72co8269foa870d20e29033319201e22>.

ACPA—College Student Educators International
American Association of Colleges and Universities
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of University Professors
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Governing Boards
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
Council of Graduate Schools
Excelencia in Education
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
Immigrants Rising
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association of Colleges and Employers
National College Attainment Network
Phi Beta Kappa
The Education Trust

Cc:

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, Chair, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary
The Honorable Dick Durbin, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary
The Honorable Tim Walberg, Chairman, House Committee on Education & Workforce
The Honorable Bobby Scott, Ranking Member, House Committee on Education & Workforce
The Honorable Jim Jordan, Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary
The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member, House Committee on the Judiciary