



# The Society for the Study of Social Problems

Publishers of the Journal *Social Problems*

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September 11, 2017

Senator Mitch McConnell  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McConnell:

We are writing to you on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP), one of the oldest and most respected social science organizations in the United States, with a membership that includes scholars from around the world. As an organization principally of academics, we are writing to urge you to find a way to continue the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. In addition to the moral and ethical arguments for the DACA program, individuals covered in this program have proven to be excellent and highly motivated students, have served or are serving in our armed forces, and contribute enormously to the economy of the United States, benefitting not only themselves and their families, but the rest of Society as well. The President's decision to terminate the program is especially troubling following on the heels of his pardon of Joe Arpaio and in light of the fact that these young people fit this administration's own description of the "ideal" immigrant. They speak English; are acculturated, since they were raised in the United States, the only home they know; do not receive (and in fact are ineligible for) government assistance; are employed, attending school, or serving in the military (in 2016 over 350 Dreamers enlisted in the Army alone, according to a Fox News report); pay taxes; and even assisted in relief efforts in Texas, with at least one them, Alonso Guillen, giving his life trying to rescue others. Alonso and the other Dreamers represent what is best about our country.

We are fortunate to have good data on this population from a survey of over 3,000 DACA recipients in forty-six states and the District of Columbia, conducted by Professor Tom K. Wong (University of California, San Diego), the National Immigration Law Center (NILC), and the Center for American Progress. According to this study, DACA recipients are earning higher salaries or wages because of their DACA status, which translates into higher tax revenues and economic growth. The study found that virtually all of them were enrolled in school or employed. After DACA, 65 percent said they bought a car and of those 25 or older, 24 percent bought a house. The study also found that 72 percent of the top 25 Fortune 500 companies employ these workers. They are also starting new businesses at a higher rate than the general population. There are estimates that DACA beneficiaries will contribute over \$450 billion to the country's GNP in the next decade.

Educationally, 45 percent are in school and of this group, 72 percent are pursuing a bachelor's degree in areas such as business administration, biochemistry, engineering, economics, neuroscience, physics, mathematics, and social work. As one respondent put it, because of DACA, "I pursued educational opportunities that I previously could not."

We were heartened by comments by members of Congress from both sides of the aisle opposing the end of DACA and hope that this view will carry the day as Congress discusses the program. The benefits far outweigh the costs. If any member of Congress wishes to discuss this program with anyone in our organization with expertise on immigration broadly and this population more specifically, please do not hesitate to contact us. Whatever differences exist between the two major parties on a wide range of issues, we hope and trust that both parties will come together on this issue.

Sincerely,



Luis Fernandez, Ph.D.  
President, Board of Directors



Héctor L. Delgado, Ph.D.  
Executive Officer