



**HBA-DC *Unpublished* Op-Ed:  
Every Day an Injustice: Congress Must Pass the Dream Act**

**(Washington, DC – March 8, 2018)** – When faced once again with the opportunity to provide a legislative solution to protect from deportation the approximately 800,000 youth known as Dreamers, Congress failed. Since President Trump ended the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program on September 5, 2017, more than 20,000 DACA holders have lost the benefits of the Obama era program that provided an authorization for employment and clemency from deportation. Each day now that Congress fails to act, about 122 DACA holders lose their protection. The loss of DACA throws into chaos and uncertainty the lives of young people who, brought to the U.S. as children and therefore not by choice, know only this country as their home. For Dreamers, the loss of DACA means losing the ability to work, drive, attend school, and otherwise lead the productive American lives that our government promised them when it coaxed them to come out of the shadows.

This injustice has failed to move Congress, but the American people understand. Fully 76% of Americans, including 69% of Republicans, support a path to citizenship or permanent status for Dreamers. Though a federal court has temporarily halted the Administration's decision to arbitrarily end the DACA program on March 5, 2018, that uncertain reprieve only impacts DACA recipients renewing their status. The March 5 deadline remained an urgent problem for organizations that appreciate both the injustice the Dreamers are suffering and the benefits they bring to American society. The Coalition of Bar Associations of Color (CBAC), composed of the Bars of attorneys of African-American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American descent, unanimously decided to make saving DACA and enacting a DREAM Act that offers a path to citizenship a priority for the group of national associations of attorneys. CBAC descended on Congress last week to impress upon both Republicans and Democrats that saving DACA was the right, just, and beneficial thing to do for the country.

On the heels of the CBAC effort, both the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) and the Hispanic Bar Association of DC (HBA-DC) led dozens of attorneys to deliver the message to Congress that a legislative solution was needed by March 5. The American Bar Association also joined the chorus and passed a resolution last month asking the Administration to rescind its decision to end DACA. The public support for Dreamers, as shown by national polls, and the effort by attorneys across the country to preserve DACA, reflect the widespread view that Dreamers should not be thrust back into the shadows but integrated into mainstream society.

The advocates from CBAC, HNBA, and HBA-DC brought a clear message to Congress: the injustice affecting Dreamers deprives American society of the benefits that Dreamers bring. More than 97% of DACA recipients are in school or in the workforce. They have begun to raise families and many of them are homeowners holding mortgages. Legislation giving Dreamers legal status would add \$22.7 billion annually to the U.S. Gross Domestic Product and an estimated \$281 billion to the national economy over a decade, ultimately raising the incomes of all Americans on a per capita basis. The economic benefit could rise to over \$700 billion over a decade if all eligible Dreamers completed their educational requirements under the DREAM Act.

March 5 has come and gone. Uncertainly now clouds the lives of hundreds of thousands of Dreamers. The United States prides itself in being a nation of immigrants and in preserving families. Our leaders must accept that rejecting Dreamers and tearing families apart by deporting them – some Dreamers have U.S.-born children – is un-American. The Administration created this problem for Dreamers by ending DACA, and Congress is in the unique position to provide a legislative solution. The time to act is now.



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