

December 12, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-233, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Room S-230, The Capitol
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader Schumer, and Leader McConnell,

As leaders in early childhood, preK-12, and higher education, we urge you to provide a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers this year. Since 2001, immigrant youth have watched with cautious optimism as iteration after iteration of legislation such as the DREAM Act and H.R. 6, the American Dream and Promise Act, have stalled in Congress. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program has provided a crucial lifeline over the past 10 years, granting hundreds of thousands of undocumented youth temporary protection from deportation and the opportunity to work lawfully in every sector of our economy, including in our country's PreK-12 schools and college campuses. However, DACA remains wholly insufficient and still faces the threat of imminent termination in the courts. In October, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower court's ruling finding that the 2012 DACA memo was unlawful, once again leaving hundreds of thousands of DACA recipients with heightened uncertainty about their future.

Today, [20,000 DACA recipients serve as educators](#), filling critical roles at a time when U.S. schools are reporting increased teacher vacancies. Earlier this year, the National Center for Education Statistics found that [44% of public schools reported full- or part-time teaching vacancies](#), further straining our education ecosystem and amplifying the challenges resulting from the pandemic. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the pandemic has [wiped out two decades of progress in math and reading](#) for U.S. schoolchildren. This context calls on us as a country to be bold in our leadership to get students back on track, and not to pull out the rug from under thousands of educators and hundreds of thousands of others contributing to communities across the country. At the same time that schools and other crucial industries are struggling to fill critical worker shortages, there are [over 400,000 undocumented students enrolled in post-secondary institutions](#) in the U.S. and [an estimated 100,000 undocumented students graduating from U.S. high schools each year](#). The vast majority

of these undocumented students are ineligible for DACA. As such, these bright young people are shut out from contributing the totality of their talents to the U.S. workforce, including schools and colleges across the country. But Congress can change that. Only Congress can ensure that these immigrant youth who are aspiring educators, scientists, healthcare professionals, entrepreneurs, and more are able to serve in the country they call home.

As the future of 600,000 current DACA recipients and more than one million other Dreamers hangs in the balance, the time to act is now. We cannot continue delaying permanent protections for the DACA recipients and undocumented youth whose home is here. We urge Congress to prioritize passing legislation that provides permanent protections and a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers before the 117th Congress adjourns. Our students, our teachers, our schools, and our communities depend on it.

Sincerely,

AACTE (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education)

AASA, The School Superintendents Association

Aliento Education Fund

All4Ed

American Federation of Teachers

American Psychological Association

American School Counselor Association

BreakFree Education

Breakthrough Central Texas

Center for American Progress

Center for Law and Social Policy

Chiefs for Change

Children's Defense Fund

Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

Council of Administrators of Special Education

EDGE Consulting Partners

Education Law Center-PA

Education Leaders of Color (EdLoC)

Education Reform Now

Educators for Excellence

EduColor

Feminist Majority Foundation

FWD.us
GLSEN
Hispanic Heritage Foundation
ImmSchools
Japanese American Citizens League
Latinos for Education
Latinx History Project
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Mass Insight Education & Research
Mass Insight Education
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
National College Attainment Network
National Education Association
New Leaders
Next100
Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration
School Social Work Association of America
Teach For America
Teach Plus
The Education Trust
TheDream.US
TNTP
UnidosUS