



Mothers of Dreamers and Dreamers (above center) are joined by Disciples and UCC faith partners at March 5<sup>th</sup> actions on Capitol Hill.

## Faith Leaders Reaffirm Urgency of Congressional Protection for Dreamers, Call on Congress to Defund Deportation, Detention, & Border Militarization

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**Washington, D.C.** – On March 5, the final day that President Trump intended to honor the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, faith leaders again urge lawmakers to pass the Dream Act. Congressional action to expand detention, deportation, and border militarization instead of protecting Dreamers and their families will weaken all U.S. communities – and is in diametric opposition to the example of welcome seen in scripture. Faith leaders from prominent faith traditions reiterated shared commitment to Dreamers, and just immigration policy for all immigrants and U.S. communities.

### Faith leaders responded to congressional inaction on Monday:

“For many years, DACA recipients and immigrant youth of similar backgrounds have been our neighbors in nearly every community, our classmates in colleges and seminaries, and our friends in workplaces. They also are key leaders in our churches who have demonstrated bravery, faithfulness, and determination as they have contributed consistently to build up the strength of their families, neighborhoods, and congregations. Our relationships with these fine young people and their families help us to fulfill our call to welcome the sojourner and experience unity among the diverse tapestry of communities in our church and nation.

“I continue to mourn for the wound that was opened in the hearts of the more than three quarters of a million youth and their families when DACA was rescinded in September—and who continue to live in fear lacking a legislative solution now six months later. Our faith compels us to support the well-being and healing of those who offer their gifts generously to our nation. We therefore continue to urge immediate passage of The Dream Act of 2017 by Congress, which would offer stability to the lives of immigrant leaders. Such a solution must not be offered as a “trade off” for excessive enforcement that would have perilous consequences for immigrant parents, border communities, and all of us who love them. We are committed to continuing work for compassionate immigration reforms that can support family unity, offer a stable future to hardworking immigrants, and enable them to fully utilize their God-granted gifts without fears of deportation.”

– **Rev. Terri Hord Owens, General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada**

“The United Church of Christ continues to organize our faith communities to be in solidarity with Dreamers during this trying time when Congress has failed to act. Although it is good news that the courts have ruled justly in temporarily protecting DACA, today the Trump administration planned to terminate the protection for Dreamers marking the unjust attack on young undocumented youth. We continue to call on law makers and the administration to pass a clean Dream Act that would create a pathway to citizenship for so many Dreamers who are part of our communities and congregations.”

– **Rev. John Dorhauer, President and General Minister of UCC**

“It is unconscionable that Congress has not acted to protect immigrant youth, yet are currently discussing increased funding for detention, deportation, and border militarization. Every dollar further entrenches an immoral system fueling mass incarceration, family separation, human rights violations, and unaccountable enforcement in our communities. Today is the last day that President Trump planned to protect immigrant youth from deportation. He assured them they would not have to worry. He has not kept his promise. Congress is shirking its responsibility by waiting for the courts to act. This leaves millions of people’s futures hanging in the balance. Congress can be responsible and humane by immediately enacting a pathway to citizenship for immigrant youth and rejecting extreme enforcement.”

– **Diane Randall, Executive Secretary of the Friends Committee on National Legislation (Quakers)**

“A nation’s values are reflected in how it chooses to spend its money. Making people more vulnerable to detention, deportation, and border militarization falls far short of the ideals upon which this nation was founded. The National Council of Jewish Women opposes this wasteful spending and what it represents – an attack on our beloved community members. The Torah teaches that we are all created *b’Tzelem Elohim*, in the image of god, and this applies regardless of immigration status.”

– **Nancy K. Kaufman, CEO, National Council of Jewish Women**

“Politicians are once again toying with people’s lives! Congress has failed to act to avert President Trump’s manufactured immigration crisis. Rather than solving DACA problems, Congress is considering a significant increase in funding for immigration enforcement that can lead to increased detention and deportation of Dreamers and their families. Congress must not give one dollar to increased enforcement while our nation’s Dreamers are left in limbo. This is one of the defining civil rights crises of our time. As March passes us by, the Catholic Sisters and activists of NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice remain committed to our nation’s Dreamers and their families – and we will not abandon them.”

– **Sister Simone Campbell, SSS, Executive Director of NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice.**

“Over the years, the Christian Reformed Church’s stance on immigration has been consistent: Government must improve refugee and immigration policy. A key aspect of immigration policy relates to the Dreamers. The Dream Act was first introduced in 2001; 17 years later, Congress still has not passed a bill addressing Dreamers’ future in the United States. Matthew 25:36-40 teaches us that our approach to the stranger as well as others who are marginalized must recognize that as we respond to “the least of these brothers and sisters of mine” it is as if we’re responding to Christ. Our prayer is that the futures of these young people would be legislatively clarified, allowing their continued contributions to our country, be it in school, in the workplace, in the community, and in our congregations.”

– **Dr. Steven Timmermans, Executive Director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America**

“This church stands with you. We hold you up in this very difficult time. I am praying for you. The PC(USA) is praying for you. But we know this fight does not end with this decision. You are true examples of active citizens advocating for their rights. We advocate with you. We raise our voices with you. I applaud the outstanding organizing, mobilizing, and public demonstrating coordinated by your leaders and by your supporters in the Dreamers/DACA networks who tirelessly fight for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and now for the DREAM Act. The public movement of solidarity and support of the DACA program and DREAMers is evidence of combined efforts. Those efforts offer other options, and we will coordinate with your many supporters to seek out ways to find a more just, permanent solution to the immigration limbo to which we, as a country, have been complacent. You have our support. Let us wake again to the struggle. Let us not be fearful of hate-filled discourse but offer an alternative path. “So, let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9, NRSV). We are committed to the long-term fight this may entail. God has called us to love each other, and that love propels us to action. And act we will do.”

– **Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

*Over the past six months of Congressional inaction, faith leaders from all over the country have flown into Washington and worked throughout the nation to advocate for the Dream Act. Faith leaders directed public witness events throughout the year including a powerful [foot-washing](#) ceremony, [Christian](#), [Jewish](#) and [Catholic-led civil disobediences](#), and multiple faith-led [press conferences](#). In the fall, the Interfaith Immigration Coalition – made up of 50 national, faith-based organizations – held a #Faith4Dream week, sending over 40 organizational [letters](#) in support of Dream Act and driving calls from across the country. Faith leaders in [Michigan](#), [Virginia](#), [Indiana](#), and all over the country stand in support of Dreamers and the Dream Act. See more at:*

<http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/2018/03/05/faith-leaders-reaffirm-urgency-of-congressional-protection-for-dreamers-call-on-congress-to-defund-deportation-detention-and-border-militarization/>