



Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation, United States Province

November 1, 2017

Dear Members of Congress:

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a U.S Catholic religious congregation joins with other faith leaders to urge the immediate passage of The Dream Act of 2017 (S. 1615/H.R. 3440) to protect Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients now at risk of deportation.

As a Catholic order of priests and brothers in the Americas and around the world, human dignity is at the heart of our mission. Lifting a passage from the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes* (27), we firmly believe that *“everyone must consider their neighbor without exception as another self..”* Over two centuries ago Oblate founder St. Eugene De Mazenod experienced persecution and fear in exile while escaping the terrors of the French Revolution. Today we continue our founder’s mission to advocate for and defend the powerless. It is through the lens of compassion that we call on Congress to urgently pass a clean Dream Act to protect Dreamers from deportation, family separation and immense hardship.

Since 2012 DACA has protected nearly 800,000 immigrant youth from deportation and allowed them to work, attend school, and raise a family. Losing DACA will have an immediate and damaging effect on these young people. Many were brought to the U.S. as young children, on average 6 years old. Many have a limited memory of the country of their birth. Many speak no other language but English. Rescinding DACA will disrupt the otherwise normal, and in some cases quite exemplary lives of these young people.

We are unfailing in our support for Dreamers because we know them as our parishioners, employees, neighbors, co-workers, friends and the highly skilled professionals we rely on for their expertise. They are also students attending our Catholic schools and young men studying to become priests. We are deeply disappointed over the Administration’s decision to end DACA and urge Congress to instead preserve and expand it to protect these talented young immigrants.

Dr. Victor Carmona, theologian, assistant professor at University of San Diego, and a board member of the Missionary Oblates JPIC committee, commenting on the termination of DACA said, “the decision to end DACA reflects fear rather than faith, hope, love, prudence, justice, temperance, fortitude, or justice.” He further cautions that now more than ever, Congress and the Administration must move beyond fear of reform and act on comprehensive immigration reform.

As a Catholic Missionary organization, we will continue to pray that you champion immigration reform and push against enforcement practices that separate families. Our faith and missionary charism believe in the dignity of every human being, especially that of children and youth.

Sincerely,

Fr. J. Antonio Ponce, OMI
Director, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)