



Recognizing America's Children (RAC) Act: Bill Summary

On March 9, 2017, Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-Florida) introduced the Recognizing America's Children (RAC) Act with nine original Republican co-sponsors. The bill would permit young undocumented immigrants, often referred to as Dreamers, who were brought to the U.S. as children and have lived here since at least January 1, 2012, to gain a five-year "conditional permanent resident" status if they pursue vocational or higher education, enlist in the military or are gainfully employed, and meet other requirements.

The RAC Act is a Republican-led bill that could provide more than 750,000 young immigrants participating in Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), as well as other eligible young undocumented immigrants brought to America as children, the opportunity to earn a legal status.

What the RAC Act Does

- The bill would create a five-year "conditional permanent resident" status for young undocumented immigrants that would protect them from deportation, allow them to work legally in the United States and permit them to travel outside the country.
- To qualify for "conditional permanent resident" status, young undocumented immigrants would need to meet the following requirements:
 - Establish that they came to the U.S. before the age of 16 and have continuously lived in the U.S. since at least January 1, 2012;
 - Pass a government background check and demonstrate "good moral character" with no felony or multiple misdemeanor convictions;
 - Earn a high school diploma or an equivalent (if they are 18 years or older); and
 - Meet one of the following requirements (if they are 18 years or older):
 1. Demonstrate an intent to join the U.S. military (military path);
 2. Be admitted to an institution of higher education (higher education path);
 3. Have a valid work authorization document (worker path).
- "Conditional permanent resident" status can be extended once for a second period of five years by meeting one of the following requirements:
 - Have been enlisted in the military or an active-duty reserve component of the military for at least three years during the preceding five-year period (military path);
 - Have graduated from an institution of higher education (higher education path);
 - Have been employed for a total period of at least 48 months during the preceding five-year period (worker path).
- As soon as the "conditional permanent resident" status is extended, recipients could apply to become a lawful permanent resident (green-card holder) if they continue to meet the requirements set in the bill. Recipients enlisted in the military could apply for naturalization immediately after obtaining lawful permanent resident status.

- Under the bill, a recipient’s “conditional permanent resident status” would be revoked if he or she failed to continue to meet all of the bill’s requirements.

Why the RAC Act Works

- **The RAC Act is a Republican-led conservative solution.** Since its introduction, more Republican members have demonstrated their support by [co-sponsoring](#) the bill.
- **The RAC Act supports our country’s values.** The bill provides a permanent solution that would allow many young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children, grew up in our communities, and consider themselves American to continue to contribute to the U.S.
- **The RAC Act helps American workers.** The bill would allow young undocumented immigrants to continue to contribute to their communities and the U.S. economy by working legally, paying their share of taxes and building businesses that hire American workers.

How the RAC Act Should be Improved

- The bill should provide more flexibility to extend the “conditional permanent resident” status, such as by permitting a combination of military, higher education and worker requirements. The bill’s requirements are currently too stringent and would result in many hardworking individuals losing “conditional permanent resident” status.
 - An individual who works for two years and then enrolls in a community college for two years would not qualify for an extension.
 - An individual honorably discharged or otherwise separated from the military after two years, for example due to an injury from combat, would not qualify for an extension because the individual would fail to meet the military path requirement and would not have enough time to meet either the higher education path or worker path requirements.
- The bill should apply to all young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States before they turned 16, have lived continuously in the United States since January 1, 2012, and have no felony or multiple misdemeanor convictions. As currently written, the bill’s requirement to have a valid work authorization document could exclude many young undocumented immigrants who are 18 years of age or older but did not participate in DACA, including those who could not afford to pay the fee to apply for DACA and potentially those whose DACA status lapsed.
- The bill should provide the opportunity to gain “conditional permanent resident” status to certain individuals who otherwise would qualify for the status but departed the United States or have been under a final order of exclusion, deportation or removal for no reason other than their immigration status.
- The bill should provide access to federal student loans or work-study programs. Access to these programs provides an opportunity for students to earn money to help pay for their higher education. A better-educated workforce creates jobs and is important for our country’s economic prosperity, which benefits all Americans.