

Why We Must Protect Dreamers Now

When President Donald Trump terminated DACA on September 5, 2017, he said that he was giving Congress [6 months](#) to come up with a legislative solution. Since then, [Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell \(R-KY\)](#), [House Speaker Paul Ryan \(R-WI\)](#), [White House Director of Legislative Affairs Marc Short](#), [Sen. John Cornyn \(R-TX\)](#), and others have maintained that Congress has until March 5, 2018, before DACA recipients will face any negative repercussions from Trump's decision to end DACA.

Dreamers cannot wait until March 2018. Here is why:

- 1. If Congress waits until the president's arbitrary deadline of March 5, 22,000 DACA recipients will already be at risk of detention and deportation.** The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that [approximately 22,000](#) DACA recipients were unable to meet the administration's October 5 renewal deadline, which means that, since September 5, approximately 122 DACA recipients have been losing protection every day—or 851 recipients per week. By Christmas Day, an estimated 13,500 DACA recipients already will have lost protection. And if Congress passes a spending bill to January 19 without protection for Dreamers another 3,400 DACA recipients will lose protection. Young people like [Osman Enriquez](#), who was separated from his infant child and placed in immigration detention last week after he lost DACA, are already feeling the consequences.
- 2. The president's termination of DACA has put tens of thousands of children at risk of detention and deportation.** As a result of Trump's decision to end DACA, by March 5, 2018, approximately 23,000 young children who are turning 15 and would have become eligible to apply for DACA will instead remain vulnerable to detention and deportation. The Migration Policy Institute estimates that if not for the president's decision to terminate DACA, 23,000 young people would have turned 15 years of age and become eligible to apply for DACA between September 5 of this year and March 5, 2018.¹ Like [Rosa Maria Hernandez](#)—the 10-year-old girl with cerebral palsy who was arrested and detained by Border Patrol agents in the hospital when she was recovering from emergency surgery—these young children cannot wait any longer for Congress to act.
- 3. Due to bureaucratic delays, some DACA recipients that filed timely renewal applications are facing uncertainty and loss of protection.** By requiring 154,000 DACA recipients to apply for renewal within a 30-day period, the DHS created a bureaucratic mess that has resulted in DACA recipients losing protection due to slow or unreasonable adjudications. Brittany Aguilera of New York City completed her renewal application on time; however, a clerical error compounded by slow processing by the administration left her without options. In an [interview with *The New Yorker*](#), she said, "I alerted my bosses right away. I put all of this into motion. They're trying to figure out a way to keep me. My last day is tomorrow."

¹ MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data from the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) and the 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) with legal status assignments by James Bachmeier and Colin Hammar of Temple University and Jennifer Van Hook of the Pennsylvania State University and the Population Research Institute.

4. Hundreds of thousands of DACA recipients who will lose protection beginning on March 6 are facing enormous stress and are unable to make life plans that the rest of us take for granted.

For all of these individuals, the consequences of losing DACA are profound:

- Losing DACA means living in constant and pervasive fear of arrest, detention, and deportation.
- For most, losing DACA means being fired from one's job, as every employer knows the date on which recipients' limited-duration work authorization expires.
- For most, losing DACA means losing one's driver's license.
- For many, losing DACA means losing the ability to enroll in public universities or losing access to in-state tuition, which will make college unaffordable for both currently enrolled and prospective students.

Dreamers who lose DACA protections immediately become at risk of detention and deportation and face an uncertain future. Congress must enact the bipartisan Dream Act by the end of the year—without further delay—to ensure that Dreamers can continue to work, study, and thrive without fear of deportation.