

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 21, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell:

We write to urge you to pass the Dream Act as soon as possible and before the Senate recesses for the holidays. There is bipartisan support for Dreamers who have grown up as Americans and know only this country as their home. They are enrolled in our colleges, serving in our military, contributing to our economy and leading lawful, productive lives. It has been over two months since President Trump rescinded the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (“DACA”) program and we have yet to see a Republican legislative plan to fix DACA. As mothers, sisters, aunts, and grandmothers, we are particularly concerned about the harm immigrant women and young children face with the rescission of DACA.

Women make up 53 percent of DACA recipients.¹ According to the largest survey of DACA recipients, about one-quarter are parents of American citizen children.² The futures of these mothers and their U.S. citizen children have been thrown into uncertainty. If Congress does not act to protect them, hundreds of thousands of women will lose their status and face deportation.

The effects of deportation have a lasting impact on immigrant families. When a parent is deported, it leaves the other with the responsibility of raising a family as a single parent—likely on a single income. If both parents are deported, their children may end up in foster care. Dreamer parents deserve to raise their children with dignity and without the threat of deportation.

Through the DACA program, immigrant women have been able to secure jobs and educational opportunities that allow them to provide for themselves and their families. In fact, over 90 percent of DACA recipients are currently employed and approximately 70 percent were able to get better paying jobs through their DACA status.³ Without the Dream Act, women will face extreme difficulty making ends meet for their families.

Women deserve to feel safe and be protected, regardless of immigration status. Taking away DACA protections places survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault at risk of further

¹ Gustavo Lopez and Jens Manuel Krogstad, “Key facts about unauthorized immigrants enrolled in DACA,” Pew Research Center, September 25, 2017, *available at*: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/25/key-facts-about-unauthorized-immigrants-enrolled-in-daca/>

² Tom K. Wong, “Results from Tom K. Wong et al., 2017 National DACA Study,” Center for American Progress, October 7, 2017, *available at*:

https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2017/11/02125251/2017_DACA_study_economic_report_updated.pdf

³ *Id.*

exploitation. There is already increasing fear among immigrant survivors to report these crimes. In fact, nearly 43 percent of legal advocates said they had personally worked with a domestic violence or sexual assault survivor who dropped a civil or criminal case because they were too scared of potential immigration enforcement actions to continue.⁴

If we do not act now to pass the Dream Act, thousands of Dreamer mothers and their families will face separation. The experience of Riccy Enriquez Perdomo, a DACA recipient and mother of two small children, who was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) this summer despite having DACA protection, is just one example of what could happen across the country if Congress fails to pass the Dream Act. Riccy was detained for seven days and shuffled to five different detention facilities during that time. Her family was unable to see her or even get accurate information on where she was being held. ICE had already prepared travel documents for her to be sent to Honduras before acknowledging their mistake.⁵ Riccy's experience and the painful uncertainty her family faced will be repeated thousands of times across the country if we do not take action.

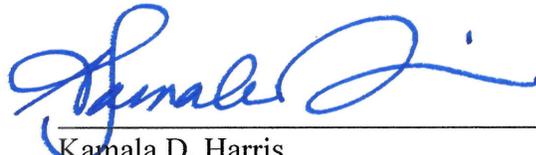
Dreamers should not be threatened with detention and deportation. Immigrant women contribute so much to our society and we cannot let them down. Congress should immediately consider legislation that would provide a path to citizenship for Dreamers.

There is absolutely no doubt that America will benefit from passage of the Dream Act, and too much is at stake not to act. We urge you to bring this legislation to the Senate floor for consideration as soon as possible.

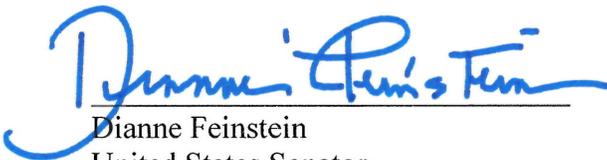
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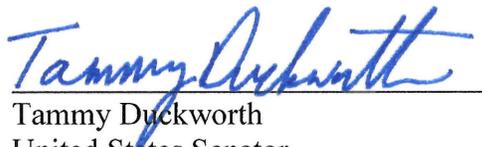
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

⁴ "2017 Advocate and Legal Service Survey Regarding Immigrant Survivors," Tahirih Justice Center et al. *available at*: <http://www.tahirih.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2017-Advocate-and-Legal-Service-Survey-Key-Findings.pdf>

⁵ Mark Curnutte, "Immigrant mom's joy upon release: 'My heart, it feels so happy,'" Cincinnati Enquirer, August 24, 2017, *available at*: <https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2017/08/24/sources-ice-says-release-florence-mom-legal-daca-status/597043001/>

Mazie K. Hirono

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