October 27, 2017

Dear Member of Congress:


Guided by the values of Catholic social teaching, we are committed to recognizing the dignity and worth of every human being and to protecting the unity of families. Through our ministry in schools, universities, and parishes, we have come to know many Dreamers, immigrants who came to this country as children and know the U.S. as their only home. These young people, without legal status, are woven into the communities we serve, yet for years have been denied access to the opportunities afforded to their peers while also being prevented from fully contributing to their own communities.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program has provided relief from deportation and work authorization to over 700,000 of these young people, allowing them to integrate into and contribute to our communities more fully. We have seen them pursue their dreams of higher education, advance their careers, start businesses, buy homes, and give more freely to their families and communities. The suspension of DACA leaves Dreamers in highly vulnerable situations, fearful of deportation, and jeopardizes the advances they have made for themselves and for our communities.

The Dream Act of 2017 provides immigrants who came to the U.S. under the age of 18 with an opportunity to become U.S. citizens through work, education, or military service. We value the Dream Act as a bipartisan and bicameral solution that responds to the urgency of this situation and the needs of both Dreamers and the nation.

Together with the U.S. Catholic Bishops, the Jesuits have long held a vision for the comprehensive reform of the U.S. immigration system. While further action will be needed to advance this vision, the Dream Act is the first step that is urgently needed.

We thank you for your consideration. Please contact Kristen Lionetti (klionetti@jesuits.org) with any questions.

Fr. Jean Denis Saint-Félix, S.J.

Secretary
Office of Justice and Ecology
Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States