



COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

October 3, 2017

Representative Mike Coffman
2443 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Coffman,

I am writing today on behalf of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCUC) to thank you for your sponsorship of the Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy (BRIDGE) Act (H.R. 496) and original co-sponsorship of the Protect DREAMer Confidentiality Act of 2017 (H.R. 3695). The CCCUC represents 182 institutions around the world, including 142 in the United States. Our institutions are affiliated with 35 Protestant denominations and the Catholic Church. Our schools educate 450,000 each year, including many Dreamers, and have over 3 million alumni. Christian colleges pursue faith and intellect for the common good.

We appreciate your ongoing support and advocacy for the hundreds of thousands of young people who, through no fault of their own, came to the United States outside the established legal process. In their time here, they have invested in their communities. Setting aside the debate regarding its legal underpinnings, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program rightly recognized that providing greater certainty and stability for these young people contributes to both their thriving and the thriving of the communities around them. Indeed, many of our campuses have Dreamers as students. We agree with you that “These are children, young people, that really played by the rules” and “came out of the shadows to register with the federal government.”¹

Our faith compels us to protect the innocent, to have mercy, and to care for the most vulnerable in society. Jesus says in Matthew 25:40, “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” There is hardly a population who better fits this description than young people without a legal home who need our help.

Mass deportations would not only be a needless expense, but an unnecessary harm to our society. The National Academy of Sciences found in 2017 that first-generation immigrants pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits over their lifetimes—an average of \$259,000 more.² As the Cato Institute succinctly summarizes it: “Each DACA permit canceled is like burning tens of thousands of dollars in

¹ Colorado Public Radio, “Coffman Presses for BRIDGE Act Vote Ahead of Trump Action on DACA,” <http://www.cpr.org/news/story/coffman-presses-for-bridge-act-vote-ahead-of-trump-action-on-daca>

² National Academics of Sciences, “The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration,” <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/23550/the-economic-and-fiscal-consequences-of-immigration>, p. 430



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Washington.”³ Business leaders, police chiefs, and educators all agree: forcing Dreamers back into the shadows will not make our nation safer, our economy stronger, or our society more united.⁴

President Trump and congressional leadership have expressed compassion towards Dreamers and a commitment to addressing the Dreamers’ difficult situation. We appreciate your introduction of this bipartisan legislation as a means of protecting Dreamers for three years while providing Congress time to create a permanent legislative solution. We believe, however, a legislative solution that creates a fair, reasonable compromise is key, and it should be done swiftly and permanently so that Dreamers are not kept in limbo unnecessarily. Creating stability is key so that participants can fully contribute to their communities.

We will be praying for and working towards quick passage of a legislative fix during this limited window of time. Pope Francis said, “You pray for the hungry. Then you feed them. This is how prayer works.” We will continue to partner in this work with like-minded organizations, such our friends at the Evangelical Immigration Table, the National Latino Evangelical Coalition (NaLEC), the National Hispanic Leadership Conference (NHLC), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU).

We stand ready to assist you in whatever ways we can as you collaborate with others in Congress to pass a compassionate compromise that provides a permanent solution to this issue. We would be happy to meet with you and/or members of your staff to discuss the impacts of the BRIDGE Act on our member institutions and how we can best be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Shirley V. Hoogstra
President
Council for Christian Colleges and Universities

³ The Cato Institute, “Five Myths About DACA,” <https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/five-myths-about-daca>

⁴ National Immigration Forum, “Local Leaders Target Congress Following DACA Rescission,” <http://immigrationforum.org/blog/local-leaders-target-congress-following-daca-rescission/>