THE ISSUE:
On September 5, 2017, U.S. Attorney General Sessions announced that as of March 5, 2018, the Trump Administration would formally terminate the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or “DACA” program which President Obama had initiated and the NAACP supported in June of 2012. The program allows some individuals who entered the country without documentation as minors to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and eligibility for a work permit. As of 2017, approximately 800,000 individuals—referred to as “DREAMers”, named for legislation known as the DREAM Act—were enrolled in the program created by DACA.

In order to qualify for the program immigrants had to be younger than 31 on June 15, 2012, must have come to the U.S. when they were younger than 16, must have lived in the U.S. since 2007, and may not have felonies or serious misdemeanors on their records. The policy further stipulated that the protections offered by DACA were renewable upon good behavior. Soon after the program was announced in 2012, it was estimated that as many as 1.7 million people already living in the U.S. might qualify. DREAMers originate from all parts of the world including Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Europe, and currently live in every state in our nation.

President Obama’s decision to initiate the DACA program came after the Congress, yet again, failed to address this crucial issue. The DREAM Act bill, which would have provided a pathway to permanent residency for undocumented immigrants brought to the United States upon meeting certain qualifications, was first considered by Congress in 2007. It failed to overcome a bipartisan filibuster in the Senate. It was considered again in 2011, when it passed the House, but did not get the 60 votes needed to overcome a filibuster in the Senate. In 2013, legislation that would have comprehensively reformed the immigration system, including allowing DREAMers permission to stay in the country, work, and attend school, passed the Senate but was not brought up for a vote by House leadership.

The DREAM Act has once again been introduced with strong bipartisan support in the U.S. Senate (S. 1615, by Senators Lindsey Graham, SC, and Richard Durbin, IL) and in the US House (H.R. 3440, by Congresswomen Lucille Roybal-Allard, CA, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, FL) in the 115th Congress. The DREAM Act would allow these young people to earn lawful permanent residence and eventually American citizenship if they: are longtime residents who came to the U.S. as children; graduate from high school or obtain a GED; pursue higher education, work lawfully for at least three years, or serve in the military; pass security and law enforcement background checks and pay a reasonable application fee; demonstrate proficiency in the English language and a knowledge of United States history; and have not committed a felony or other serious crimes and do not pose a threat to our country.

DACA recipients cannot receive any federal benefits, like Social Security, college financial aid, or food stamps; they are, however, required to pay income taxes (it is estimated that DACA recipients contribute $1.2 billion in federal, state, and local taxes). Furthermore, DACA has been extraordinarily beneficial, allowing nearly 800,000 individuals in the United States to live, work legally, and contribute to the only country most of them have ever known. As their buying power increases so do jobs across the U.S.; almost 55% of DACA recipient purchased a car since the program began, and more than one-in-ten bought their first home. Finally, because the rules are so strict for who can and cannot apply for DACA, most scholars reject the argument that DACA could somehow have led to the influx of unaccompanied orphan children who were being sent to the U.S. in 2015-2016.
THE ACTION WE NEED YOU TO TAKE:
Contact your Representative and both your Senators and URGE THEM TO SUPPORT THE DREAM ACT, S. 1615 / H.R. 3340. To contact your Senators and Representative, you may:

✓ Make a Phone Call:
Call your Senators and your Representative in Washington by dialing the Capitol Switchboard and asking to be transferred to your Senators’/Congressman’s offices. The switchboard phone number is (202) 224-3121 (see message section, below).

✓ Write a Letter
To write letters to your Senators, send them to:
The Honorable (name of Senator)
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.  20510
To write a letter to your Representative, send it to:
The Honorable (name of Representative)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.  20515

✓ Send a Fax
If you would like to send a fax, call your Senators’ or Representative’s offices (through the Capitol switchboard) and ask for their fax numbers (you can use either the attached sample letter or the message box, below).

✓ Send an E-Mail
To send an e-mail to your Senators, go to www.senate.gov; click on “Find Your Senators”. Look up your Senators by state; go to their web sites for e-mail addresses.
To send an e-mail to your Representative, go to www.house.gov, and click on “Find Your Representative” (on the right hand side of the screen) and enter your zip code. This should take you to a screen that identifies who your Representative is and how to get in touch with him or her.

REMEMBER TO CONTACT BOTH YOUR SENATORS!!!!!!

THE MESSAGE

● The DREAM Act would allow as many as 1.7 million young people earn lawful permanent residence and eventually American citizenship if they: are longtime residents who came to the U.S. as children; graduate from high school or obtain a GED; pursue higher education, work lawfully for at least three years, or serve in the military; pass security and law enforcement background checks and pay a reasonable application fee; demonstrate proficiency in the English language and a knowledge of United States history; and have not committed a felony or other serious crimes and do not pose a threat to our country.

● The rescission of DACA is inconsistent with this nation’s highest values and contrary to what most Americans believe. Passage of the DREAM Act would restore morality to our political process.

● It’s time for Congress to make a choice: stand with the people and pass the DREAM Act or stand on the wrong and immoral side of history.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS IMPORTANT MATTER!!!
If you have any questions, call Hilary Shelton at the Washington Bureau at (202) 463-2940.

MEMBERSHIP IS POWER! JOIN THE NAACP TODAY.
To become an NAACP member or to sign up for e-mail legislative and press updates, visit www.naacp.org.
(date)

The Honorable ___________________________
United States Senate / House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510 / 20515

RE: SUPPORT FOR THE DREAM ACT; SUPPORT S. 1615 / H.R. 3440

Dear Senator / Representative ______________________________;

As your constituent, I strongly urge you to co-sponsor and support the immediate enactment of the DREAM Act, S. 1615 / H.R. 3440. Passage of the DREAM Act would reverse the cruel, short-sighted decision by the Trump Administration to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA program and in doing so give hope to an estimated 1.7 million people who have lived lawful, solid lives in the United States.

The DREAM Act would allow as many as 1.7 million young people earn lawful permanent residence and work towards American citizenship if they: are longtime residents who came to the U.S. as children; graduate from high school or obtain a GED; pursue higher education, work lawfully for at least three years, or serve in the military; pass security and law enforcement background checks; pay a reasonable application fee; demonstrate proficiency in the English language and a knowledge of United States history; and have not committed a felony or other serious crimes and do not pose a threat to our country.

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Thus, I am asking you again to support immediate passage of the DREAM Act before it is too late. The decision to revoke DACA is inconsistent with this nation’s highest values and contrary to what most Americans believe. It’s time for Congress to make a moral choice: stand with the people and pass the DREAM Act or stand on the wrong side of history. Please contact me in the near future to let me know what you are doing on this issue and what I can do to help.

Sincerely,

(sign and print your name and remember to include your address)