



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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To: All U.S. Bishops
From: His Eminence Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, President
Most Reverend José H. Gomez, Vice President
Most Reverend Joe S. Vásquez, Chairman, Committee on Migration
Date: February 16, 2018
Re: National Catholic “Call-in Day” to Congress for Dreamers

Dear Brother Bishops,

We are writing to ask all dioceses in the United States to participate in a national Catholic “call-in day” to Congress to express support for Dreamers. The call to congressional offices in Washington will take place on **Monday, February 26, 2018**. Attached are resources to announce the initiative and provide details at Masses **next weekend, February 24-25**. A media release to announce this initiative more broadly will follow this letter **first thing Monday morning**.

Our call-in initiative will represent an important escalation of our efforts to urge Congress to find a legislative solution for Dreamers before the March 5 deadline that President Trump has set for ending the executive branch protection called “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals,” or “DACA.” Over the last several months, Bishop Joe Vásquez of Austin, Chairman of the Committee on Migration, has previously called upon many of you to contact key Senators and Representatives. Most recently, Bishop Vásquez wrote a letter to Senators (attached for your reference) to summarize the USCCB’s principles on legislation that relates to the protection of Dreamers. Many of you have also written on behalf of a solution for Dreamers in your diocesan and local newspapers. The Justice for Immigrants network, as well as many other faith-based and secular networks around the country, have been contacting legislators by mail, phone, and visiting in person to highlight Catholic concern regarding this important matter.

But the urgency of this matter is now at its height. Just yesterday, the Senate failed to pass a bill that would provide protection for Dreamers, and called a recess for this coming week. When Congress returns to session on February 26, it will have scarcely a week to act before the March 5 deadline. Each day after March 5, recipients face the possibility of losing their DACA benefits—their ability to go to school, serve in the military, work legally, and most of all, to avoid deportation. And even before March 5, every passing day without a solution is one where DACA youth fall out of status. While pending litigation has temporarily blocked the rescission of DACA for the moment, it is likely that the Supreme Court will overturn that temporary order. Now is the time to urge lawmakers to act.

To aid you promoting this initiative, please find attached the following materials regarding the national “call-in day”:

- A **bulletin insert** which contains all necessary information for the faithful to participate, such as the dial-in numbers for the Senate and House, as well as the brief message to convey once connected; and
- A set of **talking points** for bishops or priests to use in announcing this initiative at Mass and urging participation.

Thank you in advance for participating with us as we endeavor to find just solutions in our country for immigrant youth. Please do not hesitate to contact Bill Canny (wcanny@usccb.org), Ashley Feasley (afeasley@usccb.org), or Micheal Hill (mhill@usccb.org) if you need more information on this matter.



Committee on Migration

c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB

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February 12, 2018

Dear Senator,

I write on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration (USCCB/COM) to reiterate our support for the swift enactment of a common sense and just legislative solution for Dreamers, young people without immigration status who were brought to the United States by their parents. As you know, the Senate is scheduled to take up legislation in the coming days to address Dreamers. We urge you to consider the following principles as you review that legislation and any proposed amendments to it:

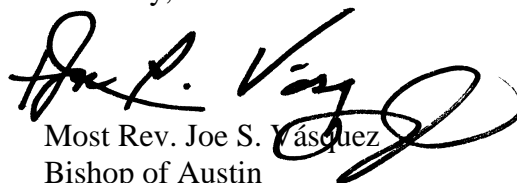
- (1) **Provide Protection to the Dreamer Population**- We agree with the proposal made by President Trump that protection should be given to the larger 1.8 million Dreamer population (instead of solely the 800,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) population), as there are many young people who were brought here as children but were prevented from obtaining DACA due to the program's age cut-offs. We believe that this larger Dreamer population should be included in any legislative solution that the Senate takes up. We urge you to support amendments, if necessary, to accomplish this goal and to oppose amendments that would narrow the class of individuals who would obtain relief under the legislation.
- (2) **Provide a Path to Citizenship**- We agree with the proposal made by President Trump to afford relief to Dreamers that permits them to apply for U.S. citizenship. Most of these young people know the United States as their only home and should not be denied the opportunity to obtain U.S. citizenship and fully participate and integrate into American civic life. We urge you to support amendments, if necessary, that would provide a path to citizenship for persons obtaining relief through this legislation and to oppose amendments that would deny them this opportunity.
- (3) **Promote Family Unity and Maintain the Family-Immigration System**- Family immigration is the foundation of our country and of our Church. Pope Francis states, "the family is the foundation of co-existence and a remedy against social fragmentation." Upholding and protecting the family unit, regardless of its national origins or its size, is vital to our faith and to our country. We are deeply disturbed by proposals that provide relief for Dreamers at the expense of dismantling our country's rich tradition of family reunification and sponsorship of close family members and ending the diversity visa program. We ask you to reject provisions or amendments to this legislation that would threaten family-based immigration.

- (4) **Protect the Vulnerable Who Seek Refuge-** A solution for Dreamers should not come at the expense of other vulnerable immigrants and refugees. It is vital to maintain existing protections for refugees, unaccompanied children, trafficking victims, and asylum seekers that help prevent abuse, ensure access to adequate care, and promote due process. We must continue to welcome and serve the vulnerable and ask you to reject provisions or amendments that undermine protections for refugees, unaccompanied children, trafficking victims, and asylum seekers.
- (5) **Ensure that All Border Security Measures Are Humane and Proportionate-** The Catholic Church has long recognized the right of nations to secure their borders and control entry into their countries. At the same time, we believe that border security and interior immigration enforcement practices should be humane and proportionate; they should make the country safer, and they should not sacrifice the due process rights and human dignity of persons seeking protection.

We believe that the urgent, longstanding need to provide relief for Dreamers is a discrete matter that should not be delayed or hindered by unrelated, controversial provisions. Accordingly, we are concerned by a number of unrelated suggestions that have been proposed as a price for providing the just relief that Dreamers need. We would oppose the inclusion of such provisions in the legislation that the Senate is poised to take up. We urge you to reject such provisions and amendments. At a minimum, we urge you to consider the dignity of the human person and protection of the vulnerable when you examine any border security, interior immigration enforcement or large-scale reform amendments that are proposed to this legislation.

An overwhelming majority of Americans agree that Dreamers need a permanent legislative solution. We support these young people who are contributors to our economy and leaders in our parishes and communities. A legislative solution for Dreamers would further unite us as a country and advance the common good. We remain committed to work with Congress to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe S. Vásquez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Most Rev. Joe S. Vásquez
Bishop of Austin
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration



Lenten Action for Dreamers: Congressional Call-In Campaign

Please participate in the Call-in Day to Congress on **Monday, February 26, 2018!** Your advocacy is critical to help the nearly 1.8 million Dreamers, young people who were brought into the United States by their parents as children. They may face deportation as soon as March 6, unless Congress reaches a bi-partisan deal to protect them. Please follow these easy steps to help:

1. Please call 855-589-5698 to reach the Capitol switchboard, and **press 1 to connect to your Senators**. Once you are connected to each Senator's office, please ask the person on the phone to **deliver this simple message:**

"I urge you to support a bipartisan, common-sense, and humane solution for Dreamers:

- *Protect Dreamers from deportation and provide them with a path to citizenship.*
- *Reject proposals that undermine family immigration or protections for unaccompanied children.*
- *As a Catholic, I know that families are not "chains," but a blessing to be protected.*
- *Act now to protect Dreamers, our immigrant brothers and sisters."*

2. Please call 855-589-5698 a second time to reach the Capitol switchboard again, and **press 2 to connect to your Representative**. Once you are connected to the Representative's office, please ask the person on the phone to **deliver the same message as above**.

After completing your call, please go to <http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org> to learn more about Dreamers and find other ways to voice your support.



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF
CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Talking Points for Introduction of National Call-In Day for Dreamers

- There is a **pressing issue** before our country today: the future of a very important group of young immigrants called the “Dreamers”.
- Dreamers are the 1.8 million young people who were brought to the United States as children by their parents **through no fault of their own**. They often know America as their only home.
- Dreamers are **woven into the fabric of our country** and of our Church, and are, by every social and human measure, American. They are contributors to our economy, veterans of our military, academic standouts in our universities, and leaders in our parishes.
- They live out their daily lives with hope and a determination to flourish and contribute to society. They should not have to live their lives in **constant fear of deportation**, which brings with it separation from their families and real dangers of violence and poverty in their countries of birth.
- It is both our moral duty and in our nation’s best interest to protect Dreamers and allow them to reach their God-given potential. Some enjoy limited legal protection now, but those protections will begin to **expire on March 5**.
- Congress is deadlocked over this important issue, and so I urge you to take a few moments on this coming **Monday, February 26**, to join with Catholics across the country in calling their Senators and Representatives to urge them to give Dreamers protection and a path to citizenship.
- To make this easier, you will find **an insert in your bulletin** with all the information you’ll need, including the toll-free number to call to reach Congress, and a message you can share with your legislators.
- Thank you for taking action on behalf of our immigrant brothers and sisters, who are among **the vulnerable in our society**.