



KNOW THE FACTS

DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS - DACA

The **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)** program was created in 2012 and provides certain undocumented immigrants with a two-year renewable work permit and protection from deportation. Most Americans support giving protections to undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children, but those who oppose DACA often argue that the program awards undeserving individuals by prioritizing their cases over those who have been “waiting in line” to enter the U.S.

Who are the DREAMERS?

Undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children are often called DREAMERS. This name is derived from the acronym of the “Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act,” a bill that was intended to provide a path to legal residency in the U.S. for individuals whose undocumented status was not a fault of their own.

It is estimated that 3.6 million immigrants currently living in the United States were brought to the country as children, and approximately 700,000 of them are enrolled in the DACA program. Most of these young people have not experienced life outside of American culture. As individuals who grew up in the U.S., DREAMERS are a part of our social fabric – a reason why most Americans support granting them some sort of relief.

What is DACA and what are its limitations?

Recognizing the need to protect DREAMERS, and in face of Congress’ failure to pass the DREAM Act, President Barak Obama signed DACA as an executive order. While DACA does not grant DREAMERS a pathway to citizenship, it allows those who meet stringent criteria to live in the U.S. for a renewable period of two years without fearing deportation. As such, DACA offers temporary relief that enables DREAMERS to pursue a college education, serve in the military, and legally work for a period of two years.

To be eligible to participate in DACA, DREAMERS must pass an extensive background check. They cannot have committed any serious offense prior to their application and must continue to be in good standing if they wish to renew DACA every two years. In addition, immigrants can apply for DACA only if they:

- 1) Entered the United States before their 16th birthday
- 2) Have lived in the country continuously since at least June 15, 2007
- 3) Have met a variety of stringent educational and background requirements
- 4) Have come forward voluntarily to apply

What are the main BENEFITS of DACA?

In addition to protecting individuals who are Americans in basically all aspects of their lives and contribute to our society’s wellbeing, DACA benefits our economy. According to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), first-generation immigrants who enter the United States as children pay, on average, more in taxes over their lifetimes than they receive in benefits, regardless of their level of education. DACA recipients end up contributing more than the average American to our economy because they are not eligible for any federal means-tested welfare.

The LWV supports fair and comprehensive immigration reform. We believe that all persons should receive fair treatment under the law, and that it is critical for the U.S. to encourage immigrant participation in our democracy.

This sheet was prepared by the League of Women Voters of Palm Beach County’s Immigration Committee.

For more information, please visit: www.lwvpbc.org/immigration