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STUDY

THE IMPACT OF DACA PROGRAM REPEAL ON JOBS

A Timeline of the Devastating and Far-reaching Job Loss Consequences If Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Is Repealed. Developed by FWD.us.

Earlier this year, FWD.us issued a report outlining the devastating consequences of a potential repeal of the DACA program, specifically outlining the dramatic and immediate job losses. Since that time, President Trump repealed DACA, urging Congress to pass a legislative fix by March 5th. Although some 22,000 individuals will already have lost DACA by that date, March 6th is when the number of DACA recipients losing work authorizations and protection from deportation will take a sharp and dramatic upturn.

The following report further details the escalating job losses that will occur beginning on March 6th and continuing for two years until all of the nearly 800,000 DACA recipients are prevented from participating in the workforce and subject to deportation. Specifically, this report looks at the job loss impact between March 6th and November 6th, the first 9 months when all DACA recipients will be barred from renewals. The findings reinforce the devastating consequences a repeal would inflict on DACA recipients and their families, as well as the dire, far-reaching consequences to communities across the country, to employers, and to the American economy across all regions and sectors. **This report specifically finds that a total of nearly 300,000 DACA recipients, 1,700 per business day, will be removed from the workforce between March 6th and November 6th.** In total, nearly 700,000 individuals who are currently employed and contributing as a productive part of the American workforce would be stripped of their ability to work and could be fired over the course of the next two years.,

Since the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was established in 2012, nearly 800,000 young people who came to this country as children have been granted temporary protection from deportation and allowed to live, work, and contribute to the only country most of them have ever known (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2017). Over the past five years, 91% of DACA recipients have found gainful employment, and are currently working for companies across the country (Wong, T., et al., (2017)).

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Five years ago, the Department of Homeland Security issued a memo establishing the DACA program (Department of Homeland Security, 2012). DHS delineated a set of criteria by which “certain young people who were brought to the United States as young children, do not present a risk to national security or public safety, and meet several key criteria” would be able to receive a temporary protection from deportation, for a period of two years, and be eligible to apply for work authorization. Individuals who are eligible are required to complete an application process and undergo a thorough background check, including fingerprinting, and are required to renew their deferred action every two years. Further, the DHS Secretary issued a memo directing the heads of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to establish a process to implement this exercise of prosecutorial discretion across their agencies to ensure that “enforcement resources are not expended on these low priority cases but are instead appropriately focused on people who meet our enforcement priorities” (Department of Homeland Security, 2012).

Despite the positive economic benefits of the program, and overwhelming public support for DACA recipients, President Trump made the decision to terminate the program on September 5th. By announcing that no further renewals would be permitted for any person whose DACA protection expires on March 6 or later, the Administration set in motion the elimination of work permits for all DACA recipients and subjected these young people to the threat of immediate deportation, putting their safety, livelihoods, and wellbeing risk. Additionally, about 22,000 DACA recipients who have deferrals that expire before March 5th were unable to meet the renewal deadline and will be forced from their jobs and subject to deportation before March 5th.

DACA recipients are upstanding members of our communities, and everyone in the program has gone through an application process, passed one or more extensive background checks including fingerprinting, paid the required fee, and is a student, or servicemember, or holds a job. DACA recipients are required to renew their deferral every two years in order to maintain their work authorization and their protection from deportation, and to show that they have continued to meet the program requirements. An estimated 200,000 DACA recipients have had their Deferred Action renewed by President Trump since he took office in January.

Fig1. Benefit Expiration with Loss of Work Authorization & Subject to Deportation and Forced Job Loss Chart

New research has further detailed the dramatic consequences to U.S. employers if DACA is repealed and renewals are put on hold, even for a brief period of time. The chart above outlines the chronological job loss consequences of repealing DACA, resulting in the potential for an average of 8,500 DACA recipients to lose their jobs each businessweek. Furthermore, for every business day that DACA renewals are put on hold, an average of more than 1,700 individuals can be fired from their jobs. And because DACA recipients live in all fifty states and the District of Columbia (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2017), the economic consequences will be felt all across the country.

Work authorizations issued to DACA recipients are no different than those issued through countless other visa categories, meaning many U.S. businesses may not even know whether they are employing a DACA recipient. Revoking the ability for current DACA recipients to renew their deferrals would force businesses into the impossible and extremely costly position of having to fire productive employees for no other reason than an arbitrary change in federal policy, potentially resulting in backlash from other employees, or their broader community. DACA recipients are already living openly in our communities. They are our coworkers, teachers, nurses and home health care workers, among many other professions. Repealing this program and forcing businesses around the country to fire hundreds of

thousands of people within our communities will have a devastating impact. Further, such action by the federal government would place a staggering cost, both financially and in relationship to their employees, on businesses in nearly every sector of the economy, and, in turn, in the communities across the United States.

Reporting by the Center for American Progress has found that nearly 91% of DACA recipients (Wong et al., 2017) are currently employed across the country, contributing billions of dollars to our communities, our economy, and in tax revenue. Removing DACA recipients from the workforce will cost \$460.3 billion in GDP loss over a decade (Svajlenka, Jawetz and Bautista-Chavez, 2017). It will cost employers \$3.4 billion in unnecessary turnover costs, and would cut contributions to Medicare and Social Security by \$39.3 billion over a decade (Magaña-Salgado, 2016; Magaña-Salgado and Wong, 2017). Moreover, DACA recipients have been important drivers of economic growth in their communities. Nearly 6% of DACA recipients have launched businesses, many employing American citizens (Wong et al., 2017). Further, almost 55% of DACA recipients purchased a vehicle, and more than one in ten have purchased their first home (Brannon and Albright, 2017).

By every measure, 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. The economic benefits of this program are clear and profound, and the dire consequences of repeal would be devastating. As this report has outlined, Congressional failure to protect Dreamers will result in thousands of Dreamers losing their jobs in the first week that renewals are barred. Every day for eight months, from March 6th till November 6th, will result in more than 1,700 individuals losing their ability to work legally. In addition to the reprehensible moral consequences, ending DACA would place severe economic strain on businesses around the country, putting them into the impossible and extremely costly position of having to fire productive employees for no other reason than an arbitrary change in federal policy, potentially resulting in backlash from other employees, or their broader community.

DACA was never intended to provide permanent protection to Dreamers, but now that the administration has ended the program Congress must act urgently to ensure they aren't ripped out of their jobs and communities. Congress is considering a number of pieces of legislation to protect current DACA recipients statutorily, and we hope members of both parties will recognize the devastating consequences of inaction and pass legislation this year to protect Dreamers.

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