

Presiding Bishop, House of Deputies president on DACA

We stand with the Dreamers and will do all that we can to support them

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[Episcopal Church Office of Public Affairs] Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop and Primate Michael B. Curry and President of the House of Deputies the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings have issued the following statement concerning the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

Today our hearts are with those known as the Dreamers—those young women and men who were brought to this country as children, who were raised here and whose primary cultural and country identity is American. We believe that these young people are children of God and deserve a chance to live full lives, free from fear of deportation to countries that they may have never known and whose languages they may not speak. As people of faith, our obligation is first to the most vulnerable, especially to children. In this moment, we are called by God to protect Dreamers from being punished for something they had no agency in doing.

Since 2012, individuals who are undocumented and who were brought to the U.S. as children have benefitted from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Through this program, those eligible have the opportunity to obtain a work permit and can secure protection from deportation. The nearly 800,000 recipients of DACA have proven that when given the opportunity, they succeed and contribute positively to our country. Without protection afforded by DACA or a legislative solution, these young people will live in fear of arrest, detention, and deportation to countries they may not remember. In six months those fears may become reality, so we must use that time wisely to advocate for their protection.

The Episcopal Church supports these undocumented youth as part of our decades-long commitment to walking with immigrants and refugees. Out of that commitment, we call on our nation to live up to its highest ideals and most deeply held values, and we call on Congress to take action to protect these young people and to formulate a comprehensive immigration policy that is moral and consistent and that allows immigrants who want to contribute to this country the chance to do so while keeping our borders secure from those whose business is in drugs, human trafficking or terror. We are committed to working actively toward both the passage of a bipartisan Dream Act by Congress and comprehensive immigration reform, and we will provide resources for Episcopalians who want to participate in this work.

For those of us who follow Jesus Christ, our Christian values are at stake. Humane and loving care for the stranger, the alien, and the foreigner is considered a sacred duty and moral value for those who would follow the way of God. In his parable of the last judgment, Jesus commended those who welcomed the stranger and condemned those who did not (Matthew 25:35 & 25:43). This teaching of Jesus was based on the law of Moses that tells the people of God: “The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.” (Leviticus 19:33-35).

We stand with the Dreamers and will do all that we can to support them while we also work for the kind of immigration reform that truly reflects the best of our spiritual and moral values as people of faith and as citizens of the United States.

-The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, presiding bishop and primate, and The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies