



Committee on Migration
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November 1, 2019

Dear Brother Bishops:

On November 12, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments on the legality of the Deferred Action Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and its attempted rescission by the Trump Administration. The USCCB, along with other institutional Catholic and Evangelical partners, submitted an amicus brief in support of the DACA recipients on October 4.

A decision by the Supreme Court will be issued in Spring 2020, very likely in the last two to three weeks of June 2020. One of two outcomes is expected:

- **If the Supreme Court terminates the DACA program** there will be a strong push and intense pressure on the U.S. Senate between the end of June and start of summer recess (July 31, 2020) to pass legislation that will prevent DACA recipients from facing deportation. The focus will be the Senate as the U.S. House of Representatives have already passed H.R. 6, the American Dream and Promise Act, which the USCCB Committee on Migration has endorsed. Because of the upcoming Presidential and Congressional elections, legislative action on DACA occurring in September and October of 2020 is highly unlikely.
- **If the Supreme Court upholds the DACA program**, we could likely see a renewed effort by the Trump Administration to issue and implement a proper regulation to end DACA that could be published in Summer 2020. One of the arguments before the Supreme Court is that the Trump Administration did not follow the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) when it sought to terminate the DACA program in September 2017. The Trump Administration could plausibly reissue a similar regulation that would eliminate DACA, but which follows the requirements of the APA and, thus, could survive judicial scrutiny.

DACA's impact on approximately 800,000 young people who have qualified and enrolled in the program – many of whom are Catholic – have been significant. With DACA, these individuals have been able to come out of the shadows to work and attend school legally and not fear separation from their families due to deportation.

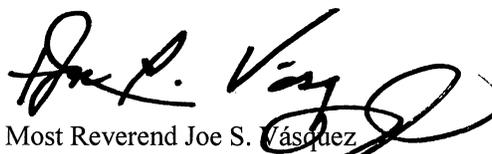
Termination of DACA would make it very difficult to quickly replace such protections for all 800,000 people via legislation or other means. Additionally, given the uncertainty and stress that DACA recipients and their families currently experience as they wait for the Supreme Court decision and after the issuance of the Supreme Court decision in Spring 2020, it is vital that the Church provide extensive public support and pastoral ministry to them at this time.

USCCB/MRS would like to propose the following activities that you can undertake leading up to the November 12 oral arguments and throughout 2020:

- **Disseminate Helpful Documents:** USCCB/MRS has prepared the attached talking points, as well as a “Should I Re-Apply/What to Do Now?” document in English and Spanish that can be disseminated to relevant diocesan contacts. Public education on this topic is extremely important as the confusion and anxiety that this situation produces for DACA recipients and their families has the risk of providing opportunities for unscrupulous individuals who are willing to exploit these vulnerable populations.
- **Masses and Dialogues Supporting and Featuring Dreamers:** Please consider holding a Mass, prayer service, and/or community dialogue on this issue in your diocese and parish communities both to raise its visibility and to help DACA recipients and their families deal with this difficult time. There are many DACA recipients who are youth and other leaders in our Church; to the extent possible, please include them in these public events. Please see the attached prayers for the faithful in English and Spanish as well.
- **Begin Conversations with Lawmakers, Particularly Senators, Now:** If DACA does not withstand U.S. Supreme Court scrutiny, we will likely face a situation where Congress will be looking to replace DACA in a matter of a few weeks since it will be during a Presidential election year. Start having conversations now with lawmakers, particularly senators, about the importance of this issue. USCCB/MRS can provide you with talking points and other helpful resources for this purpose and you can also use the attached documents.

Please feel free to reach out to Ashley Feasley afeasley@usccb.org if you have any questions or follow up requests.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Joe S. Vásquez
Bishop of the Diocese of Austin
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration