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The Trump administration's [latest changes](#) to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) only underscore what we already know: Congress should act to protect tens of thousands of North Carolina Dreamers — our neighbors — from deportation.

The administration announced that it will not accept new applications. What's more, existing DACA recipients — undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children — will be able to renew protections for only a year at a time, rather than two. And the administration hinted it will try yet again to wind down the program.

To understand how DACA serves as a critical crime-fighting tool, it's important to put aside talking points and consider facts. DACA does not exist to serve the needs of law enforcement, but it does help us keep our communities safe.

When undocumented residents live in fear that interactions with local law enforcement officials could result in deportation, they are less likely to work with police or prosecutors. That hampers our investigation of individual crimes and creates fertile ground for criminal activity: Undocumented immigrants are frequent targets for robbery and workplace exploitation. DACA helps address these problems.

On the other hand, when more members of our community trust us, we are better able to protect immigrant populations from exploitation and violent crime. When immigrants are permitted to integrate fully, they are much more willing to cooperate with us. Nearly two-thirds of DACA recipients reported being less afraid of law enforcement, while 59 percent indicated that they were more likely to report crimes after having entered the program.

For the purposes of public safety, DACA protects about 650,000 people who are emboldened to serve as productive — and vigilant — members of society.

And with 24,000 of those DACA recipients living right here in North Carolina, we have already seen that outreach efforts from community partners, including law enforcement, are making a difference in building trust and a sense of community.

A number of North Carolina communities are supporting the use of a locally verified, nongovernmental identification called the Faith ID. In this program, local faith groups take responsibility to compile evidence of an applicant's identity and work with law enforcement and local businesses to urge them to agree to accept this form of identification so undocumented immigrants can obtain local services like library cards and bus tickets and

Blog Post: For Law Enforcement, a Permanent Solution on DACA Is Critical

even verify their identity with law enforcement officials, when needed.

Although it is not as useful as a government-issued ID, we understand the value of identification and know that the Faith ID brings people out of the shadows and into our communities. Our agency also has worked with refugee community groups, many of which serve individuals from countries with hostile and aggressive police agencies, to share meals and to build relationships with the hope that future meetings between a refugee and a police officer go smoothly and are made safer for all parties involved.

The federal government has long aided local efforts in fighting crime. Now, a permanent legislative solution is critical for the fates of 650,000 men and women who know only our country as home. I urge Congress and the Trump administration to work together on behalf of Dreamers. Protecting them is a cornerstone for the safety of our communities.

