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DACA Anniversary: Congress Must ‘Finally Build a Bridge of Opportunity’

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Ten years after Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was announced, law enforcement leaders continue to urge Congress to pass a permanent legislative solution for recipients and other Dreamers.

Law Enforcement Immigration Task Force (LEITF) members believe that DACA helps them build trust and rapport with immigrant communities, especially undocumented populations. Securing long-term protections and a pathway to citizenship is the only way for them to have opportunities to pursue any vocation, including working in law enforcement, which is facing unprecedented staffing challenges.

A permanent legislative solution would not only better the lives of Dreamers, but it would also increase public safety for all. When immigrants feel safe in their communities, we are all safer.

“As a law enforcement leader, I have a sworn duty to enforce the laws of our state and country, but also to protect and serve all of those who call our community home. Accepting criminal victimization simply over fear of contact with law enforcement is unacceptable to all of us who have proudly taken the oath. Ultimately, the existence of law enforcement revolves around bringing justice to victims, without fear of reprisal over immigration status. We stand devoted to making that happen,” said **Chief Paco Balderrama, Fresno, California.**

“After 10 years of DACA, it is clear that Dreamers are contributing members of our communities. They help keep our nation safe, yet many live in fear of being undocumented. I urge lawmakers to work across party lines and find a permanent solution that allows law-abiding Dreamers to feel secure in their communities,” said **Chief Andy Harvey, Pharr, Texas.**

“As a law enforcement officer for 42 years and a sheriff the last 15 years in a large county in the Midwest, I know the importance of overall public safety for our communities. It is critically important that members of Congress work across the aisle to create a permanent solution for otherwise law-abiding immigrants who entered the country as children,” said **David Mahoney, retired Sheriff of Dane County, Wisconsin.** “Without it, immigrants will continue to fear their local law enforcement and hesitate to report crimes, empowering those who would exploit this fear and further hindering our ability to provide overarching public safety.”

“It is imperative that Congress pass a permanent legislative solution for DACA recipients and finally provide a bridge of opportunity to the thousands of Dreamers who possess a robust spirit of citizenship and merely seek the opportunity to serve the local

communities and country in which they were raised,” said **Chief Peter Newsham, Prince William County, Virginia.**

“Law enforcement depends on the trust of our communities, and DACA has helped build this trust. As a law enforcement leader, I know that when immigrants feel safe in their communities, we are all safer,” said **Chief David Valentin, Santa Ana, California.** “A bipartisan permanent solution to protect Dreamers would increase trust between law enforcement and immigrant communities by encouraging immigrants, regardless of status, to feel safe engaging with local law enforcement.”

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