

PRESIDENTS' | ON HIGHER EDUCATION ALLIANCE | AND IMMIGRATION

Welcoming Undocumented, Other Immigrant, and International Students

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The Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration urges Members of Congress to support Dreamers; undocumented and other long-residing immigrant students; international students and scholars; their families; and other immigrants who contribute to our nation's higher education campuses.

As a nonpartisan alliance of American college and university leaders dedicated to increasing public understanding of how immigration policies and practices impact our students, campuses and communities, the Presidents' Alliance supports congressional legislation, appropriations, and oversight that fulfill our nation's historic aspiration to inclusion and integration.

At its core, our nation is one of immigrants. Our country—including educational, business, and cultural institutions—benefits significantly from the contributions that immigrants of all backgrounds and statuses with drive, ambition, and talent have made throughout our nation's history. Our economy advances when we remain true to the best of our heritage as a land of opportunity for those who dream of a better life for themselves, their children, and their families. Our campuses are supported by immigrant scholars and staff who ensure that U.S. institutions of higher education continue to teach and mentor students so that they thrive on campus and beyond, produce the research and innovation that spur our economy, and train the next generation of leaders and engaged citizens to succeed and contribute locally, nationally, and globally.

Specifically, the Presidents' Alliance supports immigration-related legislation that provides access, opportunity, stability, and predictability for the following students and their families:

1. **Undocumented Immigrant Students.** Undocumented students represent individuals who have attended U.S. high schools and are members of our communities deserving of dignity, respect, and the opportunity to realize their full human potential. These students include both those with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and other undocumented students.
2. **International Students and Scholars.** International students enrich our campuses and communities as educational and research environments. When applying for a visa, they should be allowed to express interest in staying and working in this country after graduation, ensuring that our institutions of higher education remain magnets for the world's talent. Our country must support international students through pathways to stay and work in this country.
3. **Refugees and Other Immigrant Students.** Refugees and other immigrant students, including dependents of nonimmigrants and other long-term residents, contribute

significantly to the educational landscape and our campus communities. We support efforts to make them feel welcome as well.

Enactment of the following policies by Congress represents measurable steps that our nation can take to reaffirm its commitment to these populations and kick start our nation's economic engine.

1. **Relief for Dreamers, Other Immigrant Youth, and the Nation's Undocumented Population.** Congress must, at long last, provide permanent relief to Dreamers (including nonimmigrants subjected to persistent backlogs and dependents of H-1B holders who have turned 21), Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders and their families by providing a roadmap to lawful residency and citizenship. These individuals represent long-time members of our communities, with U.S. citizen relatives and deep ties to this nation, and they are American in everything but name. Congress must also provide relief to the nation's larger, long-residing undocumented population to ensure that students have the support of their families, many of whom have been living and working in the United States for decades, with U.S. citizen children and deep ties to their communities.
2. **Expand Access to Higher Education.** Congress should support the expansion of in-state tuition, federal financial aid, and admissions to Dreamers, TPS holders, and other immigrant youth who entered the United States at a young age and have long-term residency. This expansion should include (a) access to federal financial aid (e.g., Pell grants, loans, work study, and services); (b) restoring access to postsecondary education benefits for all immigrants; (c) restoring state authority to expand in-state tuition to immigrants; and (d) enacting non-discrimination provisions in the context of admissions, aid, and in-state tuition based on a student's (or that of their parents) immigration status.
3. **Restore Equity to Professional and Occupational Licensing.** Occupational licensing is essential in allowing long-residing immigrant youth, students, and adult learners to fulfill their educational and employment aspirations, especially considering that over 1,100 professions (and about 25 percent of all workers) require licensing.

Congress should: (a) rescind federal and state prohibitions on professional, commercial, and business licenses to all immigrants, especially DACA recipients and all immigrants with an employment authorization document; (b) end licensing discrimination and affirmatively prohibit the denial of federal and state professional, commercial, and business licenses based on immigration status; and (c) authorize and appropriate funding to encourage states to pass laws expanding access and portability of licenses to all immigrants.

4. **Implement Policies to Recruit and Retain International Students, Scholars, and Scientists.** The United States has long recognized the importance of attracting top international student talent, particularly to institutions of higher education, to help grow our nation's economy. Congress must work to establish a national recruitment strategy that encourages students, scholars, and scientists from a diversity of backgrounds, countries, ethnicities, and skill sets to both study and utilize their talents in the United

States. As part of this recruitment strategy, Congress should reduce the barriers to international students coming to the United States and streamline their ability to obtain permanent status after completing their education. This includes expanding dual intent, protecting Optional Practical Training (OPT) and Curricular Practical Training (CPT), and establishing a pipeline to a green card for international students, lifting the country caps for employment and family-based petitions, while increasing the number of green cards to reduce backlogs, and preserve DHS's authority to issue work permits through regulations. Finally, Congress should ensure that our nation's administrative policies, especially those related to unlawful presence, are fair and just for international students.

5. **Fair and Just Policies for Refugees.** Congress should work with the administration to implement policies for refugees that mirror our nation's historic aspiration to welcome those who have fled violence, oppression, and instability. Concurrently, Congress should ensure that our nation has the resources to fully welcome and integrate refugees and their families.

Importantly, the Alliance supports the above policies in a single comprehensive legislative framework or in smaller pieces, as long as all of these principles are ultimately adopted. Part of the Alliance's mission is to urge bipartisan approaches to reform, and we are open to fair compromises. We are mindful to support legislative solutions that do not harm other immigrant communities as a precondition to relief.