



Office of the President

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Andria Strano, Acting Chief,
Office of Policy and Strategy, Div. of Humanitarian Affairs
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service, Dept. of Homeland Security
5900 Capital Gateway Drive
Camp Springs, MD 20746

Re: DHS Docket No. USCIS-2021-0006, Comments in Response to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals On behalf of Yakima Valley College, Yakima, WA.

I submit this comment letter in response to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's proposed rule, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DHS Docket No. USCIS-2021-0006), published September 28, 2021. I write in support of the proposed rule and of further methods to strengthen and fortify the DACA program.

I am the president of Yakima Valley College, a designated Hispanic Serving Institution in Yakima, WA. The population in Yakima County is 52% Latinx and the student population of YVC is 60% Latinx. Although we do not identify or count undocumented students; 423 DACA students (out of 4400 total students) completed the WAFSA form this Fall Quarter. The WAFSA is a Washington State form which mirrors the federal FAFSA and enables undocumented students to qualify for State Need Grants. Because DACA is no longer available to students, this number greatly understates the actual number of undocumented students enrolled at Yakima Valley College and excludes the many undocumented students who can no longer work or pay for college classes.

We strongly support codifying the DACA program into regulation. Our undocumented (Dreamer) students have excelled in many academic programs including Nursing, Surgical Technology, Dental hygiene, Pharmacy Technology, Teacher Education, Criminal Justice, Medical Billing and Coding, Engineering and many others. Most need to work fulltime while attending college because they do not have access to federal financial aid. Our "Dreamer" graduates are filling the critical workforce needs within our communities and throughout our state. **DACA must be cemented into legislation or these extremely talented students will not have a path to higher education or successful careers.**

It is imperative that we remove the arbitrary barriers to DACA such as prior unlawful immigration status and aging out of the system. These gifted students currently have no path to legal status once they turn 21.

We need to preserve and fortify the DACA program so that it continues to serve its original purpose today and well into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Linda J. Kaminski'.

Linda Kaminski, EdD
President, Yakima Valley College