



October 18, 2022

Dear Colorado United States Senators and Representatives,

There is an urgent need to pass legislation providing permanent legal status for Dreamers following the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that deemed the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy unlawful. This decision, agreeing with a lower court ruling, paved the way for the termination of DACA, which provides work authorization and deportation protection for 611,000 people. We don't know how much longer the DACA program will last.

We respectfully ask that you, members of Congress representing Colorado, introduce and work to pass legislation that would provide permanent protection for Dreamers, who were brought to the United States as children, grew up here and are now integral parts of our communities and economy.

More than three-fourths of DACA recipients in the U.S. are in the labor force, contributing an estimated \$11.7 billion to the American economy annually. Nearly 1 million U.S. citizens live with a DACA recipient – 26% of DACA recipients are married, and 32% have children – meaning the removal of Dreamers from the workforce would have a drastic negative economic impact on the U.S. workforce and hundreds of thousands of American families.

In Colorado, it has been estimated that removing DACA workers could reduce the state's annual GDP by \$856 million, including compounding the employment gap with the largest reductions in the agriculture, construction and hospitality industries. Colorado had twice as many job openings as unemployed workers this summer, so we cannot afford to lose any workers in this tight labor market – especially when it would devastate so many families and important industries.

We are already losing out on the workforce contributions of so many Dreamers, who either aren't eligible because of DACA's decade-old criteria or because the courts stopped the processing of new DACA applicants. This year, about 100,000 undocumented young people will graduate from U.S. high schools, only one-quarter of whom are estimated to be eligible for DACA. Children are already graduating from our K-12 system with few options to use their education without work authorization, which is right where highly skilled DACA recipients will be if the program is shut down.

The only way to ensure the dissolution of DACA does not cause devastating implications for our society and economy is for Congress to pass legislation creating permanent legal status for Dreamers, something 74% of Americans support – including a majority of both Democrats and Republicans. Sensible immigration policy will solidify legal opportunities to live in the U.S., strengthening our workforce and future. With the courts signaling the end of DACA, Congress must act now to provide a path to citizenship for Dreamers, not only so they can continue to live

and work in the only country they have ever known, but so our economies and communities can continue to thrive.

Sincerely,

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David A. Tandberg, Interim President, *Adams State University*

Leah Bornstein, President, *Aims Community College*

Joe Garcia, Chancellor, *Colorado Community College System*

John Marshall, President, *Colorado Mesa University*

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