February 12, 2024

Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Kamala Harris
Vice President of the United States
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20006

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Congress Must Include Protections for Dreamers in Immigration Compromises

Dear Mr. President, Madam Vice President, Mr. Speaker, and Leaders Schumer, McConnell, and Jeffries:

On behalf of the Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, we write to urge you to include relief for Dreamers, both with and without DACA, in any bipartisan compromise. Dreamers, who have grown up in the United States and are attending or have graduated from American colleges and universities, are integral to our country and to the communities, workplaces, schools, and families to which they belong and which rely on them. An immigration compromise that leaves out Dreamers is counter-productive to our national economic and security interests.

The Presidents’ Alliance comprises over 550 college and university presidents and chancellors leading every type of higher education institution, from private universities and colleges to large public universities to community colleges, and including Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and faith-based institutions. As part of our mission, we encourage bipartisan approaches to reform, including support for fair compromises.

Bipartisan solutions continue to be urgent as the future of hundreds of thousands of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients is imperiled in federal court. As leaders in higher education, we have seen firsthand the hard-won success of Dreamers with and without DACA against a backdrop of legal uncertainty. Many Dreamers are multilingual, enriching the educational experiences of all students and helping to produce better members of an increasingly globalized workforce. Dreamers are pursuing and graduating from undergraduate and graduate education in STEM, healthcare, and teaching, fields that face severe labor shortages. Three-quarters of DACA recipients were employed in essential occupations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
A failure to provide relief for Dreamers impacts the future of our economy, and losing this “capable workforce” threatens national security interests as well, hampering the nation’s “ability to be competitive and defend itself.” DACA recipients contribute almost $2.1 billion to Social Security and Medicare annually and unleash a wave of entrepreneurship. DHS estimates that halting DACA renewals would cost the U.S. economy over $400 billion over the course of the next two decades.

Dreamers’ success is our country’s success. As Dreamers thrive, so too will their fellow Americans, uplifting their families, communities, and state and local economies.

We recognize the challenges of reaching a compromise on such a difficult issue, understanding that individuals with sincere intentions may have differing opinions on various aspects of immigration policy. We stand ready and are eager to work with you, by providing valuable insights, resources, and expertise.

We appreciate your many efforts on behalf of our nation’s colleges and universities and the students and communities we serve, including the immigrant, refugee, and international students who are vital members of our campus and local communities. For any questions regarding the Alliance and its work, please contact Diego Sánchez, our Director of Policy and Strategy, at diego@presidentsalliance.org.

Sincerely,

Miriam Feldblum  
Executive Director  
Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration

Nancy Cantor  
Co-Chair, Steering Committee  
Chancellor  
Rutgers University-Newark

Louis Caldera  
Co-Chair and Senior Advisor, Steering Committee

Raj Echambadi  
Co-Chair, Steering Committee  
President  
Illinois Institute of Technology
Tony Allen
President
Delaware State University

Alison R. Byerly
President
Carleton College

Noelle E. Cockett
President
Utah State University

Michael M. Crow
President
Arizona State University

José Luis Cruz Rivera
President
Northern Arizona University

Janine Davidson
President
Metropolitan State University of Denver

John J. DeGioia
President
Georgetown University

Kyle Farmbry
President
Guilford College

Jane K. Fernandes
President
Antioch College

Gregory A. Haile
Former President
Broward College

Deneece G. Huftalin
President
Salt Lake Community College

Robert Jones
Chancellor
University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign

Philomena V. Mantella
President
Grand Valley State University

Belinda Miles
President
SUNY Westchester Community College
Anthony E. Munroe  
President  
Borough of Manhattan Community College-CUNY  

Elsa Núñez  
President  
Eastern Connecticut State University  

Eduardo J. Padrón  
President Emeritus  
Miami Dade College  

Havidán Rodríguez  
President  
University at Albany  

Kim Wilcox  
Chancellor  
University of California, Riverside