

# Wisconsin Hispanic Lawyers Association Board: Statement on DACA Program

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The Wisconsin Hispanic Lawyers Association (WHLA) Board condemns President Trump's decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and we urge Congress to work together to pass legislation, like the DREAM Act, that will allow the 800,000 young people working, studying and providing tremendous contributions to our country through DACA to continue to make those contributions free from the threat of deportation.

The DACA program was designed to address the stalemate in Congress to act on immigration reform, leaving more than a million young people brought to the U.S. as children without documentation in a state of limbo, unable to move forward or contribute fully to their communities. DACA has provided these bright, talented young people the certainty to better themselves and fully contribute to their communities in the only country they have ever called home: the United States. By every measure, the program has been an incredible success. As noted by hundreds of leading U.S. employers, including Microsoft, Apple, Amazon and Marriott, 97% of DACA recipients are enrolled in school or are working legally, providing \$460.3 billion dollars every year to our national GDP and \$24.6 billion each year in Social Security and Medicare tax contributions, programs in desperate need of additional funding to remain viable for future generations.[i] In a time of reduced funding to state and local governments, DACA recipients contribute more than \$2 billion in state and local taxes every year, nearly \$18 million each year to Wisconsin alone.[ii]

Beyond their economic contributions, these young people are vital members of their communities, providing their energy, ideas and talents to their schools, houses of worship, workplaces and neighborhoods. What will happen to these nearly 1 million young people when DACA is gone and they are once again forced into the shadows – unable to study, work or pursue their dreams without fear of being ripped away from their families, friends and communities? Forcing these young people back into the shadows is short-sighted and will negatively impact our economy and the safety of our communities. By unnecessarily stonewalling some of the brightest youth in our communities already enrolled in DACA and preventing hundreds of thousands more that would have qualified on their fifteenth birthdays, this action prevents the United States from reaching its true potential. Moreover, it is cruel and goes against everything that we stand for as Americans.

The Wisconsin Hispanic Lawyers Association Board condemns the President's decision to rescind DACA and urges Congress to pass immigration legislation to finally provide the security and certainty these young people – who are Americans in every sense of the word – deserve and need to continue to better themselves and their communities.

*The Wisconsin Hispanic Lawyers Association (WHLA) is the state's premier association for lawyers of Hispanic origin. The WHLA Board represents more than fifty attorneys in public and private practice representing individuals, businesses, and government interests across the state, directly employing or supporting hundreds of jobs, with a substantial impact on Wisconsin commerce. The purposes of the Wisconsin Hispanic Lawyers Association are to advance the professional development of its members and to advise on issues of interest to the Hispanic community on a local and national level.*