

FWD.us: Education and community leaders call on lawmakers to permanently protect dreamers from deportation

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DACA recipient Betsabe Flores (top right corner) addresses a roundtable discussion hosted by FWD.us in Milwaukee on the threats facing the DACA program.

MILWAUKEE, WI - FWD.us today hosted a roundtable discussion with local education leaders, community advocates and concerned citizens at the Schlitz Park "Bottlehouse B" building on the dire threat to DACA, which could bring life-altering consequences for hundreds of thousands of hardworking young people and their families, employers, and communities.

The event coincides with the start of hearings in the federal court case *Texas v. Nielsen*, filed by seven states and led by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton over the constitutionality of the DACA program, as well as whether to block the federal government from processing DACA renewals or new applications.

The case, which is ongoing and being presided over by District Judge for the Southern District of Texas Andrew Hanen, could end DACA renewals in a matter of weeks. The decision could cause tens of thousands of Dreamers to lose their deportation protections and work authorizations over the next few months.

Participants in today's event included FWD.us Director of Coalitions & Policy Alida Garcia, La Casa de Esperanza Vice President of Education Services Maria Ayala,

Schools that Can Milwaukee Communications Director Isral Bruin, Immigration Attorney Glorily Lopez, Chaplains In Schools Mission Advancement Director Paul Berger, Marquette University Career Services Director Jennifer Janey, Augustine Preparatory Academy Superintendent Alfonso Carmono, Augustine Preparatory Academy Director of Development Chris Sosnay, Christ-St. Peter Lutheran School Dean of Students Kimberly Fischer, St. Anthony School Manager of Student and Parent Services Jason Camey, Resurrection Power Ministries Senior Pastor Rosie Harvey, Teach For America Teacher Leadership Development Managing Director Claire Becker, and Christ Lutheran Pastor Chad Walta. All highlighted the pressing need for a long-term legislative solution for Dreamers, and the importance of Wisconsin's DACA recipients.

Wisconsin is home to 7,729 DACA recipients who have grown up in the United States since childhood and pay more than \$15 million in state and local taxes annually. If DACA protections are lost, Wisconsin will lose more than \$7.8 million in taxes each year and over \$427 million in GDP.

Below are quotes from participants at today's roundtable discussion:

"DACA Recipients, having lived in this country for nearly their whole lives, have become ingrained in our communities and are vital contributors to both the local and national economies. Dreamers should not have to live court case to court case; it's imperative that Congress works quickly to enact a long-term legislative solution for DACA Recipients." - **La Casa de Esperanza Vice President of Education Services Maria Ayala**

"Right now, Dreamers are living their daily lives constantly in fear of a new court case which could strip them of their deportation protections and right to work in this country. Despite that uncertainty, they remain hard working, vital economic contributors and valuable members of their communities. We need our representatives in Congress to work across the aisle to give these brave young people the chance to earn citizenship and continue contributing to the only country they call home." - **Isral DeBruin, Director of Communications, Schools that Can Milwaukee**

"As a student, I have been provided with unique opportunities thanks to the DACA program. I ask Congress to pass legislation to allow Dreamers like me to continue their studies and work, and to contribute to this country we love." - **Betsabe Flores, DACA Recipient**