

National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

January 3, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: NHLA Request to Meet and Discuss a Legislative Solution for DACA Holders

Dear Majority Leader McConnell:

We write on behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), a coalition of 45 leading national Latino nonpartisan civil rights and advocacy organizations, to request an urgent meeting with you to discuss a legislative plan for the Dream Act to protect DACA holders. NHLA is deeply disappointed in the Congress's failure to pass legislation in 2017 that would protect young immigrants from deportation and ensure that they are able to continue to study and work. It is imperative that NHLA leadership sit down and meet with you directly on this topic as soon as possible.

The issue facing Congress about how to address DACA holders and other Dreamers is particularly important for the Latino community in the United States. More than 90 percent of DACA holders are Latino. Continued inaction to resolve President Trump's precipitous decision to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program will adversely affect hundreds of thousands of Latino families, with broader negative effects on communities, employers, and local economies. Already, hundreds of DACA holders are losing their protection from deportation and their work authorization each week. Many, many more will be negatively affected if a legislated program is not both enacted and implemented by March 5, 2018. As you know, the Administration cannot implement a program without sufficient lead time. Congress must act immediately in the new year to ensure fair and timely implementation.

The responsibility to establish a permanent legislative fix for DACA holders and other Dreamers rests with Congress, and this is an issue that must be Congress's top priority in the new year. Furthermore, NHLA is increasingly concerned that negotiations and plans for a legislative proposal are moving forward without direct input from Latino leaders.

NHLA has advocated for passage of the Dream Act for many years. Most recently, NHLA included its passage in our 2016 Policy Agenda, setting the coalition's top priorities for the next four years. NHLA wants to ensure that the legislative proposal put forth for young immigrants is one that takes into account the interests and concerns of the Latino community. Of course, our primary concern is that legislative action in the form of the Dream Act receive immediate consideration in the new year. NHLA has already indicated that it will be scoring actions on this issue as part of our educational outreach to Latino voters nationwide.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alianza Americas
American G.I. Forum
ASPIRA Association
Avance Inc.
Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute
Farmworker Justice
Green Latinos
Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities
Hispanic Federation
Hispanic National Bar Association
Inter-University Program for Latino Research
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
League of United Latin American Citizens
MANA, A National Latina Organization
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
Mi Familia Vota
National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures
National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives
National Association of Hispanic Publications
National Day Laborer Organizing Network
NALEO Educational Fund
National Association of Latino Independent Producers
National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.
National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Hispanic Environmental Council
National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Institute for Latino Policy
National Latina/o Psychological Association
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
Presente.org
SER Jobs for Progress National
Southwest Voter Registration Education Project
UnidosUS
United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce
U.S.- Mexico Foundation
Voto Latino

Please contact NHLA through Andrea Senteno, of MALDEF, at asenteno@maldef.org, or Laura Esquivel, of Hispanic Federation, at lesquivel@hispanicfederation.org, with any questions regarding this issue. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Thomas A. Saenz
MALDEF, President and General Counsel
NHLA Immigration Committee Co-Chair



Jose Calderon
Hispanic Federation, President
NHLA Immigration Committee Co-Chair