January 3, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Speaker Ryan:

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.
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