National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

June 4, 2019

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: NHLA Support of the American Dream and Promise Act, H.R. 6

Dear Representative:

We write on behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), a coalition of the leading national Latino nonpartisan civil rights and advocacy organizations, in support of the American Dream and Promise Act of 2019, H.R. 6. This legislation provides a pathway to citizenship for “Dreamers,” undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children, and long-term U.S. residents with Temporary Protected Status (TPS). NHLA urges each member to support passage of the bill without harmful amendments. This bill will provide necessary relief to Dreamers and those with TPS – this is particularly urgent given the Trump administration’s attempts to end any form of relief for these individuals and to aggressively attack the Latino and immigrant communities with draconian policies.

President Trump’s decision to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program upended the lives of nearly 800,000 DACA holders, only a third of whom were eligible to renew their DACA status before the arbitrary and insufficient October 5, 2017 deadline. This is a critical issue for the Latino community given that 93.5 percent of DACA holders are Latino. As has always been the case, Congress is responsible for passing a permanent legislative fix for DACA holders.

For the thousands of individuals who have been unable to apply to be new DACA recipients after the program’s rescission, the urgency for Congress to pass legislation is even clearer. They are without protection and work authorization, and each day that passes is simply too long for congressional inaction. In addition, individuals with TPS, many of whom have built their lives in this country for nearly two decades, must face the very real and substantial threat of deportation as the Trump Administration seeks to end these country designations – a move that has only been stalled with the intervention of numerous federal courts.

It is disappointing that an issue that affects so many people has not been given the serious consideration it merits until now. The Latino community deserves and demands that our legislators take this opportunity to denounce dog-whistle tactics...
and get to work by engaging in a meaningful and good-faith effort to pass this bill free from negative amendments that seek to further demonize the Latino and immigrant communities. Congress must not shirk its responsibility here; it must work to protect undocumented young Americans and those who have resided in this country for many years. American families across the country are depending on congressional action.

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

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NHLA Immigration Committee Co-Chair