



AMERICAN
IMMIGRATION
LAWYERS
ASSOCIATION

November 27, 2018

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Leader Pelosi,

The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), the private bar association of immigration lawyers and law professors, congratulates you and the Democratic party on your success in this year's elections. As you prepare to take leadership of the House of Representatives, AILA calls upon you to advance a bold vision for immigration reform that offers commonsense solutions for our nation. As a first step, we urge you to pass stand-alone legislation within the first 100 days of the 116th Congress that provides permanent protection for Dreamers and recipients of Temporary Protected Status (TPS), and to put forward a broader vision of reform to our immigration system that aligns it with the needs of our economy and American communities across the country.

The need for Congress to act quickly to protect the Dreamer and TPS populations is urgent because the Trump Administration has taken actions that place these long-standing members of our society at grave risk of deportation. In September 2017, the administration announced the termination of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program which has provided legal protection from deportation and work authorization to more than 800,000 young people. In a series of announcements, the administration has also taken steps to end TPS for more than 325,000 recipients from ten countries. While court rulings have kept some of these protections in place temporarily, the administration has made clear its commitment to overturning the decisions.

In nearly every state, AILA members represent thousands of Dreamers and TPS recipients, who have lived with their families and in their communities for years. Nearly all have employment authorization and are working or own businesses that contribute to the economy. Estimates show that these populations will increase the U.S. gross domestic product by at least \$1 trillion during the next decade. Ending their legal protection and deporting them would not only cause them hardship and separate them from their families but also hurt the local businesses and economies that rely upon them. When the new Congress convenes, we recommend you act immediately to re-introduce and pass as a single package the Dream Act of 2017 (H.R. 3440) and the American Promise Act (H.R. 4253), both of which currently enjoy broad and bipartisan support.

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In addition, we ask that you maintain your steadfast opposition to the unwise and wasteful increases in DHS appropriations that the administration is seeking, including funding for the border wall, detention beds that will jail immigrant children and families, and additional Border Patrol agents. Increases to the DHS budget will do enormous harm without improving our nation's security. Moreover, yielding to the administration's unreasonable demands in the current appropriations negotiations will make it far more difficult to win protection for Dreamers and TPS recipients now or at any time in the near future.

Not long ago, members of both parties understood the need to reform our immigration laws to better serve our economy and society. This spirit of bipartisanship was rooted in an understanding that the United States is a nation of immigrants and that immigration has always been a defining feature of our history. In the interest not only of our economy, but of families and communities from coast to coast, this bipartisan commitment to real reform must be revitalized. Immigration is an issue that can, and should, unite us as a people—not divide us.

AILA therefore urges you to pursue a bold immigration reform plan that also seeks to bring Americans together in defense of the fundamental principles upon which this nation is based and in pursuit of a shared prosperity for all who call this country “home.”

Sincerely,

Ben Johnson
Executive Director

Gregory Chen
Director of Government Relations