



STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL

SUBMITTED TO THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

HEARING ON “The Long-term Impact of Immigration: Exploring Reforms to our Nation’s Guest Worker Programs and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, and their Potential Impact on the American Economy and Local Communities ”

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The American Immigration Council is a non-profit organization which for 30 years has been dedicated to increasing public understanding of immigration law and policy and the role of immigration in American society. We write to address the impact of the President’s decision to end Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), as well as share our analysis and research on how immigrants play a vital role in our nation's economy.

DACA & Dream Act

On June 15, 2012, the Obama administration announced that it would offer “deferred action” to immigrants who were brought to the United States as children and meet other specific requirements. While never intended to be a permanent solution, DACA brought stability to the lives of so many, providing nearly 800,000 young people (also known as “Dreamers”) with the opportunity to live, work, and participate openly in society without fear of deportation from the country they call home.

The termination of DACA will place hundreds of thousands of individuals in legal limbo. The damage will not only be felt by the young people directly affected, but will reverberate to their families, friends, and neighbors, as well as workplaces and educational institutions. Employers and educators will be thrust into uncharted territory as so many valued employees, teachers, and students lose their work permits. With the elimination of DACA, only Congress can provide a long-term solution for Dreamers. Our factsheet, [The Dream Act, DACA, and Other Policies Designed to Protect Dreamers](#), lays out the various legislative solutions currently available before Congress.



Immigrant Contributions to Economy

As Congress considers whether and how to restructure the ways in which our current immigration system works, it is important to remember Americans pride themselves on belonging to a nation of immigrants. Today, immigrants make enormous contributions to our economy and our communities—just as they always have.

The overwhelming weight of research shows that in our dynamic labor market, immigrants *complement* their U.S.-born counterparts. The nation's 26.3 million foreign-born workers comprised 16.5 percent of the labor force in 2013. As discussed in our report, [Giving the Facts a Fighting Chance](#), these immigrants—be they lawful permanent residents (LPRs) or unauthorized—make enormous contributions to the U.S. economy as workers, consumers, taxpayers, and entrepreneurs. Moreover, empirical research demonstrates that there is no correlation between immigration and unemployment. In fact, immigrants—including the unauthorized—create jobs through their purchasing power and their entrepreneurship, buying goods and services from U.S. businesses and creating their own businesses, both of which sustain U.S. jobs.

H-1B workers, for example, *positively* impact our economy and the employment opportunities of native-born workers. In our factsheet, [The H-1B Visa Program: A Primer on the Program and Its Impact on Jobs, Wages, and the Economy](#), we explain that research shows that H-1B workers complement U.S. workers, fill employment gaps in many science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) occupations, and expand job opportunities for all. The United States faces challenges in meeting the growing needs of an expanding knowledge-based innovation economy.

Further, skilled immigrants help create new jobs and new opportunities for economic expansion. Our factsheet, [Foreign-born STEM Workers in the United States](#), explains how foreign-born STEM workers have made important contributions to the U.S. economy in terms of productivity and innovation. The foreign-born are more likely than the native-born to obtain a patent, and they account for rising shares of U.S. patents in computing, electronics, medical devices, and pharmaceuticals. Twenty-five percent of high-tech companies founded between 1995 and 2005 had at least one immigrant founder, and over 40 percent of companies in the Fortune 500 in 2010 were founded by an immigrant or the child of an immigrant.

It is important that Congress ensure that our country's immigration laws and policies reflect the enormous contributions that immigrants make to our economy and communities. Immigration is good for business, good for workers, and good for families.