

**REPORT ON LEGISLATION BY THE
IMMIGRATION & NATIONALITY LAW COMMITTEE,
FAMILY COURT & FAMILY LAW COMMITTEE,
COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND
CHILDREN & THE LAW COMMITTEE**

**H.R.496
S.128**

**Rep. Coffman
Sen. Graham**

A bill to provide provisional protected presence to qualified individuals who came to the United States as children.

**The “BRIDGE” Act or
“Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy” Act**

THIS BILL IS APPROVED

The New York City Bar Association (“City Bar”) writes in support of prompt passage of the Bar Removal of Individuals Who Dream and Grow our Economy, or BRIDGE Act, recently introduced in the Senate by Senators Durbin and Graham and in the House by Representatives Coffman and Gutiérrez. The New York City Bar Association has over 24,000 attorney and law student members.¹

The City Bar is pleased to see continued bipartisan support for protecting young people who were brought to the United States as children and who have gone to school in the United States or enlisted in the U.S. military. These immigrant youth are among America’s best and brightest. They include high school and college students; core members of our nation’s workforce; and emerging leaders in fields as diverse as education, nursing, medicine, law, social

¹ The Immigration and Nationality Law Committee is comprised of current and former immigration and family court judges, immigration attorneys, and immigration law professors, and its members have deep expertise in the field of immigration law. The Family Court and Family Law Committee is comprised of jurists, public interest and private attorneys representing litigants and children in Family Court and other related proceedings, who have deep expertise in the field of Family Law, including related immigration law. The Council on Children is comprised of individuals interested in and active on, issues and challenges impacting children and their families. Members include attorneys representing children, parents and child welfare agencies; judges; Family Court practitioners; and senior staff from the government and private agencies. The Children and the Law Committee addresses legal issues that impact upon the quality of life for children and families. The Committee’s work highlights child welfare issues and supports innovative initiatives that advance children’s rights.

work, science, and engineering. Nearly 800,000 of these young people have put themselves forward and received temporary protection from deportation through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, allowing them to study or work in the United States, and to contribute to their communities.² DACA kept hundreds of thousands of families together and led to increases in tax revenue, higher education, home and auto ownership, and public safety.³ The repeal of DACA could cost businesses \$3.4 billion, and the Social Security and Medicare funds \$24.6 billion.⁴

Should President Trump cancel DACA, as recent reports have suggested, DACA recipients would face the prospect of near-certain deportation. Unless Congress acts swiftly, they would face permanent separation from their families. Indeed, one survey found that twenty percent of DACA-eligible individuals have a child under the age of 18, half have U.S. citizen brothers or sisters and two-thirds have other U.S. citizen family members.⁵ Thus, the pain of the DACA repeal would separate hundreds of thousands of families and cause extreme hardship to U.S. citizen children.

The BRIDGE Act will provide critical protection to these young people by codifying in statute a new temporary status and employment authorization. The City Bar strongly supports efforts to protect DACA recipients, and therefore endorses the BRIDGE Act as a temporary measure. We also believe the BRIDGE Act does not go far enough in protecting the immigrant youth who are making vital contributions to our communities and our economy. Congress should re-introduce and pass the DREAM Act, most recently introduced as S. 952 and H.R.1842 in the 112th Congress, which would give those who came to the United States as children and have attended school or enlisted in the military a path to lawful permanent residence and ultimately citizenship. While the BRIDGE Act is vastly preferable to allowing DACA recipients to lose status, leaving them in limbo longer results in unnecessary harm to families, businesses, and our economy. As young people take out loans and start families in the United States, they must

² DACA-eligibility extends to individuals who: were under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012; came to the United States before reaching their 16th birthday; have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, up to the present time; were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and at the time of making the request for consideration of deferred action with USCIS; had no lawful status on June 15, 2012; are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States; and have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety. *See* U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security June 15, 2012 Memorandum “Exercising Prosecutorial Discretion with Respect to Individuals Who Came to the United States as Children”, available at <https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/s1-exercising-prosecutorial-discretion-individuals-who-came-to-us-as-children.pdf>.

³ DACA After United States v. Texas: Recommendation for the President, A Report by the Committee for Immigration Reform Advocacy Working Group 5, 8 (2016), available at https://www.maldef.org/assets/pdf/2016_07-22_CIRI-AWG_DACA_4-Year_Report_15_JUL_2016.pdf.

⁴ Octavio Blanco, *Trump Immigration Plan Could Cost the U.S. Billions*, CNN, Dec. 20, 2016, available at <http://money.cnn.com/2016/12/20/news/economy/immigration-daca-cost-trump/>.

⁵ Tom K. Wong & Carolina Valdivia, *In Their Own Words: A Nationwide Survey of Undocumented Millennials*, 11-12 (2014), available at <http://unitedwedream.org/words-nationwide-survey-undocumented-millennials/>.

perpetually fear that the life they are building here could be pulled out from under them at any moment. These young people deserve permanent protection.

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January 2017