



Committee on Migration

c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB

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July 21, 2017

Dear Senator:

I write on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration (USCCB/COM) to urge you to support S.1615 the "Dream Act of 2017." This bipartisan legislation, introduced on July 20, 2017, by Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Richard Durbin (D-IL), would protect numerous immigrant youth from deportation, including the approximately 780,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients.

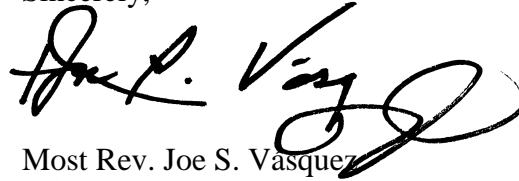
The Dream Act is intended to protect immigrant youth who entered the United States as children and know America as their only home. The bill offers qualifying immigrant youth "conditional permanent resident status" and a path to full lawful permanent residency and eventual citizenship. In order to receive the conditional status, the youth must, among other requirements, have entered the U.S. as a child, been continuously present in the United States for at least four years prior to enactment of the bill, meet certain admissibility and security requirements, and have obtained or be pursuing secondary education. Current DACA recipients are also deemed eligible for the conditional status. S.1615 allows recipients of this conditional status to obtain non-conditional lawful permanent residency if they satisfy requirements that include: background checks; demonstrated English proficiency; and either education in a higher learning institution, honorable military service, three years of employment in the United States, or a hardship exception.

My brother bishops and I believe in protecting the dignity of every human being, particularly that of our children. The Catholic Bishops have long supported these immigrant youths and their families who are contributors to our economy, academic standouts in our universities, and leaders in our parishes. These youths have grown up in our country, some even choosing to put their lives on the line to serve in our armed forces. They truly exemplify the extraordinary contributions that immigrants can provide to our nation. These youths should not be forced to live their lives in constant fear that they will be deported at any moment and separated from their families. It is both our moral duty and in our nation's best interest to protect them and allow them to reach their God-given potential.

For these reasons, we ask you to support and co-sponsor the Dream Act of 2017. We also

urge you to continue to work towards the larger legislative reform of our immigration laws that our country so desperately needs. As always, USCCB/COM stands ready to work with Congress to reform our immigration system in a humane, just, and common-sense manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe S. Vasquez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Most Rev. Joe S. Vasquez
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration