



## Statement of the American Friends Service Committee

Submitted to the House Judiciary Committee markup on the Dream Act, H.R. 2820, and the American Promise Act, H.R.2821

May 21, 2019

Contact:

Peniel Ibe

Policy Associate

[pibe@afsc.org](mailto:pibe@afsc.org); 202-750-5330

As a 102-year-old faith-based organization grounded in Quaker belief in respecting the dignity and worth of every person, the American Friends Service Committee urges Congress to enact a permanent solution that creates a roadmap to citizenship for all Temporary Protected Status (TPS), Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients.

Our decades of experience working with immigrant communities across the United States inform our support for measures that ensure the integration of immigrants as full members of our society rather than actions that seek to isolate them from communities that they call home.

**AFSC seeks to highlight the urgent need for a solution.** We need legislation that keeps families and communities together. The administration's inhumane termination of TPS for various countries, DED for Liberians, and DACA for young immigrants threaten the safety, well-being, and livelihoods of more than one million immigrants in the U.S. – as well as their families and communities. Without a legislative fix, these terminations will bring about the next family separation crisis.

**AFSC supports efforts that provide a roadmap to citizenship for TPS and DED holders and DACA recipients.** Congress should establish this roadmap on a platform that centers the respect and humane treatment of all immigrants. The Dream Act of 2019 and the American Promise Act of 2019 as introduced are bold steps in the right direction. The introduction of these bills is a testament to extraordinary grassroots organizing and tireless advocacy across the country by TPS, DED, and DACA beneficiaries, their families, and allies. Amplifying the voices of those most directly impacted, we urge Congress to push the legislation as introduced forward.

As introduced, the bill eliminates roadblocks to lawful permanent residency for eligible immigrants, expands the pool of eligibility for permanent protections, and offers relief for some deported community members, amongst other favorable provisions. This bill allows beneficiaries to gain permanent residency and citizenship in a fair, timely, and orderly fashion. This bill, as introduced, puts the call to love our neighbors into action and centers the humane treatment and respect of all immigrants. Congress should remain committed to these principles.

**DACA, TPS, and DED recipients deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.** While we appreciate that Congress is finally acting to protect TPS, DED, and DACA recipients, AFSC is deeply concerned about provisions in the managers' amendment added after its introduction. These provisions stand in conflict with our longstanding efforts to end the punishment of immigrants, racial profiling and criminalization of youth of color.



**American Friends  
Service Committee**

*Quaker values in action*

The inclusion of language in the Dream and Promise Act that is based on xenophobic perceptions of immigrants as public safety or national security threats is unconscionable. The inclusion of unnecessary language related to alleged gang affiliations and juvenile adjudications causes the bill to fall short of forging a true first step toward fundamental change in the way we address our immigrant community. We urge members of the Judiciary Committee to reject the urge to use this narrative and instead address our immigrant community members with dignity and respect.

**AFSC urges Congress to reject any provisions and amendments that disqualify specific individuals from consideration of relief because they have had previous contact with the criminal legal system.** Such amendments do not consider how the criminal justice system has historically and currently criminalized Black and Brown people. AFSC sees firsthand the unfair and deadly consequences of contact with a discriminatory criminal justice system. Thus, we oppose the inclusion of language that subjects immigrant youth to the denial of benefits.

AFSC urges Congress to provide permanent relief for TPS and DED holders and DACA recipients without expanding detention infrastructure, increasing funding for immigration enforcement, or further militarizing our border communities.

AFSC urges Congress to reject amendments based on fear, discrimination, or criminalization of entire categories of people and consider ways to boost eligibility and individualized review.

AFSC urges principled and visionary leadership on effective immigration policies that embody the best of our nation's values.