



Statement for the Record from

Todd Schulte
President
FWD.us

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

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

FWD.us supports **H.R. 2820** and **H.R. 2821**, collectively referred to as the “Dream and Promise Act,” a critical step to provide protection and a pathway to legal status and citizenship for millions of immigrants living and contributing in America today.

FWD.us is a bipartisan political organization, founded by leaders in the technology and business communities, that believes America’s families, communities, and economy thrive when more individuals are able to achieve their full potential.

Immigrants and immigration have long been a source of strength for our nation. New arrivals to the U.S. help drive business creation, fuel innovation, strengthen communities, and bolster the middle class. Smart immigration policy grows the economy, helps Americans, and helps keep families together. But, for 30 years, Congress has failed to fix our broken immigration laws, and this failure is holding all of us back.

Today, the House Judiciary Committee has an opportunity to take a critical step in that direction; by moving the Dream and Promise Act out of committee and to the floor, this Committee can help permanently protect more than two million people with longstanding ties to the United States from deportation.

These votes will be historic: if the Dream and Promise Act passes the House, it will be the first time in nearly a decade that this Chamber has passed substantial immigration legislation, and only the fourth time in approximately 30 years that such legislation will pass either chamber of Congress with a viable path to the President’s desk. Most importantly, it will create a pathway for 2.5 million people - including 2 million Dreamers - to earn legal status and ultimately citizenship.¹

This opportunity is possible because of a decade of dedicated advocacy and organizing from immigrant communities across our country, particularly the Dreamer and TPS communities. They have bravely shared their stories and pressed their case, and while the American people stand with them, Congress has failed to deliver. Today, that can change.

For nearly two years now, Dreamers, TPS holders, and DED recipients have lived under threat of deportation and being ripped out of the workforce due to the actions of the Trump Administration - an entirely avoidable crisis that would devastate millions of American families while crippling our economy.

FWD.us supports the Dream and Promise Act because we understand the urgency of providing a solution for Dreamers, TPS holders, and DED recipients. These individuals have contributed greatly and have done everything asked of them, and the time has come to give them the opportunity to participate more fully in our nation as Americans.

¹ “American Dream and Promise Act of 2019 (H.R. 6) Populations and their Economic Contributions by U.S. Congressional District”, *Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration*, March 27, 2019, available at <https://dornsife.usc.edu/csii/map-dream-and-promise-act/>.

While the Supreme Court has wisely chosen not to yield to DOJ's request to fast-track a DACA hearing, and while TPS protections remain in place due to injunctions, the lives of those individuals currently protected by these programs (and millions more who were not able to register before their protections were terminated) are still crippled by uncertainty. Allowing DACA, TPS, and DED to be terminated without Congress passing a legislative solution will take a devastating human and economic toll in communities across our nation.

Ending these programs would force businesses into the difficult and extremely costly position of having to fire productive employees for no other reason than an arbitrary change in federal policy. Dreamers and TPS holders are our friends and colleagues, and they are teachers, nurses, and home health care workers, among many other professions.

If current DACA recipients are no longer allowed to renew their protections, more than one thousand DACA holders would lose status *every day*, totaling more than 460,000 individuals being ripped out of the workforce and put under the threat of deportation this year.² Nearly 96% of DACA recipients across the country are currently employed or are in school, contributing billions of dollars to our communities, our economy, and in tax revenue.³ Removing DACA recipients from the workforce will cost \$460.3 billion in GDP loss over a decade⁴ and could cost employers as much as \$6.3 billion in unnecessary turnover costs.⁵

Conversely, economists found that implementing DACA and allowing Dreamers to work would increase GDP by \$3.5 billion; if the Dream Act were implemented, that increase to GDP would grow to \$15.2 billion.⁶ The Congressional Budget Office's extremely conservative analysis of the Dream Act found that its passage would drive a net federal revenue increase of \$900 million.⁷

² Wong, Tom K., Abrar, Sanaa, Jawetz, Tom, Kmec, Ignacia Rodriguez, O'Shea, Patrick, Rosas, Greisa Martinez, Wolgin, Philip E., "Amid Legal and Political Uncertainty, DACA Remains More Important Than Ever", *Center for American Progress*, August 15, 2018, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2018/08/15/454731/amid-legal-political-uncertainty-daca-remains-important-ever/>

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Svajlenka, Nicole Prchal, Tom Jawetz, and Angie Bautista-Chavez, "A New Threat to DACA Could Cost States Billions of Dollars," *Center for American Progress*, July 21, 2017, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2017/07/21/436419/new-threat-daca-cost-states-billions-dollars>.

⁵ Bier, David, "Ending DACA Will Impose Billions in Employer Compliance Costs," *Cato Institute*, September 1, 2017, available at <https://www.cato.org/blog/ending-daca-will-impose-billions-employer-compliance-costs>.

⁶ Ortega, Francesc, Ryan Edwards, and Amy Hsin, "The Economic Effects of Providing Legal Status to DREAMers", *IZA Institute of Labor Economics*, January 2018, available at <http://ftp.iza.org/dp11281.pdf>.

⁷ "Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate: H.R. 3440 Dream Act of 2017", *Congressional Budget Office*, December 15, 2017, available at <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files?file=115th-congress-2017-2018/costestimate/hr3440.pdf>.

TPS holders have labor force participation rates of over 80%,⁸ and are on track to contribute \$164 billion to our GDP over the next decade.⁹ And while many TPS holders live in states with very large immigrant populations like California, Florida, New York and Texas, six other states – Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Georgia – are home to more than 10,000 TPS holders.¹⁰ Because TPS holders have established such deep roots, abruptly forcing them out of the workforce and our country, where they have worked hard to rebuild their lives, would impose harmful economic consequences on the U.S., as well. Researchers estimate that ending TPS for El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti alone would result in a \$45.2 billion reduction in GDP over a decade and cost employers nearly \$1 billion in turnover costs.¹¹ Subsequently deporting those previously protected would cost American taxpayers an additional \$3.1 billion.

Dreamers and TPS holders have spent most of their lives in the United States, and forcing them to leave would take a terrible human toll as well. By definition, Dreamers arrived in this country at a young age, and have grown up here - the average Dreamer arrived in the United States at age 6, and has lived here for about 20 years.¹² Nationally, more than 7 million individuals live in mixed-status households that include Dreamers.¹³

Similarly, the majority of TPS holders have lived in the country for a very long time,¹⁴ and have set down roots, pursued careers, built families, and integrated into American communities and society. In fact, TPS holders from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti – 90% of the current TPS population – have lived in the U.S. for an average of 19 years, and have between them an estimated 273,000 U.S.-citizen children born and raised in America.¹⁵ Not only would they be

⁸ Warren, Robert and Donald Kerwin, “A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti”, *Journal on Migration and Human Security*, August 2017, available online at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/233150241700500302>.

⁹ “Temporary Protected Status in the United States: Beneficiaries from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti”, *American Immigration Council*, October 23, 2017, available at <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/temporary-protected-status-united-states>.

¹⁰ Wilson, Jill H., “Temporary Protected Status: Overview and Current Issues,” *Congressional Research Service*, March 29, 2019, available at <https://fas.org/sqp/crs/homesec/RS20844.pdf>.

¹¹ Baran, Amanda and Magaña-Salgada, Jose, “Economic Contributions by Salvadorian, Honduran, and Haitian TPS Holders”, *Immigrant Legal Resource Center*, April 2017, available at https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/resources/2017-04-18_economic_contributions_by_salvadoran_honduran_and_haitian_tps_holders.pdf.

¹² Wong, Tom K., Abrar, Sanaa, Jawetz, Tom, Kmec, Ignacia Rodriguez, O’Shea, Patrick, Rosas, Greisa Martinez, Wolgin, Philip E., “DACA Recipients’ Economic and Educational Gains Continue to Grow”, *Center for American Progress*, August 28, 2017, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2017/08/28/437956/daca-recipients-economic-educational-gains-continue-grow/>.

¹³ Svajlenka, Nicole Prchal, “The Dream and Promise Act Could Put 2.1 Million Dreamers on Pathway to Citizenship”, *Center for American Progress*, March 29, 2019, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2019/03/26/467762/dream-promise-act-put-2-1-million-dreamers-pathway-citizenship>.

¹⁴ Warren, and Kerwin, “A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti”.

¹⁵ Warren, and Kerwin, “A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti”.

ripped from the lives and families they've built here, they would face returning to, or being deported to, countries that are still suffering from war and natural disaster that they haven't seen in decades.

For Liberians with DED, the story is much the same - forcing Liberian Americans to return to an unstable country will not only risk their safety, but will also separate families, harm communities, and disrupt local economies.

For these reasons, we strongly support the legislative solution outlined in the Dream and Promise Act, to provide a pathway for qualified Dreamers, TPS holders, and DED recipients to secure legal status and ultimately citizenship.

We are particularly encouraged by the inclusivity of this legislation, providing a solution for multiple categories of immigrants, all of whom have lived in the country for a long time and who have had their protection from deportation and ability to work challenged by this Administration. Importantly, the bill provides multiple ways for individuals to qualify for legal status, through education, work experience, or military service, as well as including waivers for hardship. The bill also includes important provisions guaranteeing protections for those who are eligible but did not enroll in these programs, as well as those who have been deported simply because they were not enrolled.

We also support the narrow focus of this bill in dealing directly with the urgent threats faced by Dreamers, TPS holders, and DED recipients, and urge the Committee to reject any attempt to add in poison-pill measures not germane to this issue, such as further expansions of interior enforcement efforts or restrictions on legal immigration avenues.

There are few - if any - issues of this significance that have this level of broad bipartisan support. Providing a pathway for Dreamers and other temporarily protected individuals would match the will of the American people, and would be an important step toward meaningful comprehensive reform. Dreamers and TPS holders are American in every way except on paper; it is far past time we give them the opportunity to secure a permanent place in our country.

We urge House Judiciary members to move this critical legislation out of committee, and for leadership to bring this legislation swiftly to a vote. Every Member of Congress should vote to provide these vital communities with the stability and peace of mind they desperately need, and there is absolutely no reason to delay.