

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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October 9, 2017

The Honorable Charles Grassley
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing
Oversight of the Administration's Decision to End Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Feinstein,

On behalf of California Community Colleges, I submit the following comments regarding President Trump's decision to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

The California's Community Colleges represent the largest system of public higher education in the United States. Our 114 colleges across 72 districts serve 2.1 million students; two-thirds of the undergraduate students in the state of California and one-tenth of the nation's undergraduate population. Our colleges are founded on the principle of providing all students the opportunity to reach their full potential, and we embrace diversity in all of its forms. Our system is committed to serving all communities and all students, regardless of immigration status.

California has long recognized the economic and societal contributions of our undocumented immigrant community and has worked to provide undocumented students with access to the state's public higher education systems. In 2001, California took action to provide long-term California residents, regardless of citizenship status, access to resident tuition and fee prices at the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California (AB 540, Firebaugh). The state authorized these students to receive state and institutional financial aid in 2011 (AB 130/131, Cedillo) and, in 2014, created the California DREAM Loan Program (SB 1210, Lara).

The DACA program enabled these *dreamers* to study and live without fear of deportation. It recognized that these students grew up in our communities, attended our schools, and have only ever known America as their home. These young people are working, studying at colleges, or enlisting in the armed services. With access to work permits, postsecondary degrees and training certificates, they are contributing to our society and economy. Nationwide, about 800,000 young people have DACA status, and California is home to 223,000 DACA recipients.

Over the past nine months, the California Community Colleges have worked to reassure students that our campuses will remain safe, welcoming places for students of all backgrounds to learn. Unfortunately, the Administration's decision to rescind DACA after a six-month delay means that many of these young people are living in fear and uncertainty about their status in this country.

I urge Congress to take immediate and permanent action to preserve the DACA program and work toward comprehensive immigration reform that provides a pathway to citizenship for *dreamer* students. I also urge Congress to request guidance from the Department of Homeland Security that clearly authorizes students who are DACA recipients to travel outside the United States for study abroad programs, international conferences or for family emergencies.

I appreciate the Senate Judiciary Committee action to provide Oversight of the Administration's Decision to End Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on this matter. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Laura Metune, Vice Chancellor of Government Relations, at (916) 323-5951 or lmetulan@cccco.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'EO', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Eloy Ortiz Oakley
Chancellor

cc: Members of the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary