



Deportation of 'Dreamers,' DACA Repeal Would Cost Over \$300B

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A repeal of the deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA) program, and subsequent deportation of nearly 750,000 young undocumented immigrants, would result in a \$280 billion reduction in economic growth over the next decade, according to recent research from the libertarian Cato Institute.

The Cato Institute [study](#) "The Economic and Fiscal Impact of Repealing DACA" also estimates that the direct impact of repeal and deportation would cost the federal government \$60 billion, in addition to the reduced economic growth.

The cost of repealing DACA "is not trivial," Ike Brannon, visiting fellow at the Cato Institute and president of Capitol Policy Analytics, told attendees of a panel hosted by the Migration Policy Institute Jan. 27.

Congress would have to figure out a way to offset the cost of legislation that would repeal DACA, "either raising taxes or getting rid of a program somewhere else" for this legislation to go through, Brannon said.

The research comes in light of President Donald Trump's campaign promise to terminate DACA immediately upon taking office. But since winning the election, Trump has taken a softer tone on "Dreamers," the young immigrants that DACA covers.

Even without deportation, DACA recipients who lost their status would likely fall into work typically held by undocumented immigrants, and the cost economically would still be great, Brannon said.

An Uncertain Future

While the Trump administration has not yet repealed the program, the president signed an [executive order](#) Jan. 25 that could point to an uncertain future for DACA recipients.

"The executive orders Trump signed yesterday are very broad," Janet Napolitano, president of the University of California and former Secretary of Homeland Security under the Obama administration, told attendees of the MPI event.

“There is no need to eliminate DACA in order to have an immigration system that works,” Napolitano said. DACA recipients are “low, low, low” enforcement priorities, according to Napolitano, and have already passed criminal background checks. Trump has stated his intended focus is on undocumented workers who have committed crimes, and the DACA population does not fit that description, Napolitano added.

“I’m hopeful the Trump administration will see that there is no need to eliminate DACA even under their revised executive orders on enforcement,” Napolitano added. “That uncertainty is breeding a lot of stress in our campus communities for these young people and for their families.”