

DACA program: How the repeal affects New Jersey

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Ripple effects from the repeal of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals will be felt throughout New Jersey, which is among the 10 states with the largest number of recipients of the program.

DACA participants in New Jersey have been able to go to college, get better-paying jobs that have allowed them to financially help their families, but also buy cars and homes, set up businesses and contribute to the U.S. economy.

Reversing DACA could cost the federal government \$60 billion in lost revenue over 10 years, according to a recent study by the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank. Those economic losses will be felt in New Jersey, where more than 22,000 young immigrants have received work permits and two-year protections from deportations with DACA.

“Even though I had known this was going to happen for about two weeks now, it’s still very heartbreaking,” said Tony Choi, who attended school in Englewood and was among those rallying in New York City on Tuesday after the DACA repeal was announced. “This provided my life with such great stability for the past five years, and to know it’s going to sunset on me — it’s just heartbreaking.”

Here are other ways that New Jersey could change without DACA.

Economic impact

The Garden State could lose an estimated \$1.5 billion in annual GDP, since many DACA recipients are working and paying taxes, said Erika J. Nava, a policy analyst for New Jersey Policy Perspective. Around 19,161 of the 22,000 who have DACA are working and pay taxes and have purchasing power. The Garden State’s young immigrants contribute \$66 million in state and local taxes each year, the seventh-highest level of all states, according to a report released in April by the Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy. Yet, the study found, those tax revenues would drop by \$21 million if DACA protections were lost. Among the 10 states with the largest DACA-eligible populations, the study found that many of those in New Jersey who were eligible to apply for the program did not.

Many New Jersey DACA recipients are going to college, attending classes at Montclair State University, the New Jersey Institute of Technology, William Paterson University and Rutgers University, to name a few. They are working toward degrees in science, teaching, computer science and medicine. They also participate in social and cultural programs at the colleges, and some have even started their own organizations. Carimer Andujar of Passaic, who attends

Rutgers University in New Brunswick and is an outspoken advocate there, founded “UndocuRutgers” to help other students like her who were DACA recipients and were attending the school. DACA recipients from New Jersey also helped launch Movimiento Cosecha, a national movement that organized Tuesday's rally in New York City. They also work in many fields, such as health care, medical research, refugee assistance and retail.

Cultural diversity

DACA recipients in New Jersey hail from all parts of the world, including Mexico, South Korea, Bangladesh, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and El Salvador. Nationwide, the top countries where DACA recipients were born are: Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, South Korea, Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia, the Philippines, Argentina, India, Jamaica, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic. New Jersey could lose cultural contributions from these DACA holders, including from the arts, literature, sports and food, like restaurants.