



Why are Trump and Congress avoiding comprehensive immigration reform?

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President Trump signed the spending bill on Feb. 15, which keeps the government open through the end of the fiscal year. Included is about a quarter of the funding he sought for a border wall. That's not nearly enough to effectively improve border security in any real way.

But also absent was a real solution to protect the hundreds of thousands of immigrants living in the U.S. under temporary protections. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and Temporary Protected Status programs are set to expire. The president and Congress neglected to form a legalization program that would allow DACA recipients and TPS holders to remain in the U.S. permanently.

This was a missed opportunity. We need comprehensive immigration reform to secure our borders and to repair our broken immigration system.

Americans agree. According to an ABC News/Washington Post poll, nearly 90 percent of Americans and 80 percent of Republicans believe that Dreamers deserve the ability to earn a path to citizenship. In fact, 3,400 faith leaders, 600 college and university presidents and more than 800 business leaders from every sector of the economy have called on Congress to pass legislation to protect Dreamers permanently.

This is a bipartisan issue as members of Congress from both sides of the aisle recognize the positive contributions Dreamers have made to the social and economic well-being of the United States. Nearly 800,000 Dreamers and tens of millions of their family members, friends, and co-workers are depending on Congress to take decisive action to prevent them from being fired from their jobs, ripped from their families, and deported to countries they may not even remember.

Our nation and our economy can't afford the damage that would come from deporting these members of our communities. The Center for American Progress estimates that failing to reinstate the DACA program would reduce the gross domestic product (GDP) by \$460 billion over the next decade, a devastating blow to our economy. The CATO Institute estimates that the aggregate economic cost would be over \$200 billion and the cost to the government would be \$60 billion.

Comprehensive immigration reform should include a stronger and more stable border, with an orderly system of flow at specific checkpoints. It should include more incentives for legal immigration which involves creating an easier system that takes into account the realities of men

and women fleeing from countries with no traditional forms of ID. And it should also include a pathway for people who have already been caught up in the failed system.

I have met with lawmakers from both parties to discuss creating a solution for DACA students at Southeastern University in Lakeland, Fla., where I serve as president. To be effective in this cause, we must be willing to meet and discuss this issue with our members of Congress.

As a founding member of the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, I am working with other university presidents to support policies to create a welcoming environment for immigrant, undocumented and international students and scholars on campuses nationwide. We are dedicated to increasing public understanding of how immigration policies and practices impact our students. Our commitment as an alliance is to serve all students.

Within the next few weeks, the House of Representatives is expected to reintroduce the Dream Act of 2019. The bill, led by Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-Calif.), represents an updated version of the Dream Act of 2017. Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.) and Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.) are in the process of introducing the Higher Education Dream Act of 2019. If passed, the bill would update federal law to increase access to higher education for immigrant students. The Presidents' Alliance will submit recommendations on both bills.

We need compassionate and protective reform that allows a pathway to citizenship while also protecting our borders.

Let's pass comprehensive immigration reform to get this right once and for all.