

COLORLINES

Federal Government Hurtles Toward Shutdown as Lawmakers Refuse to Budge on Immigration

Alfonso Serrano

January 19, 2018

A Congressional impasse over the future of DREAMers threatens to thwart a stopgap spending measure that would prevent the federal government from shutting down at midnight (January 20).

Although the [House approved](#) a spending measure on Thursday (January 18) that would keep the federal government running through February 16, top Democrats have insisted they will not vote on the Senate version of the bill unless it protects Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a program that shields from deportation young immigrants who were brought to the United States illegally as children.

According to [several reports](#), some [40 Democrats](#), including Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), are also insisting that the stopgap bill include economic aid for hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico and a tougher federal response to the opioid epidemic. Republicans seem unwilling to concede to deportation protections for those DREAMers who, under the Obama administration, self-identified as undocumented to enroll in DACA.

Several Senate Democrats who voted for a December stopgap spending measure, including Tim Kaine (D-Va.) and Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), said they would not vote for the latest extension, even though some of them [worry](#) of being blamed for the shutdown as they face tough election battles this year in states that President Trump carried in 2016.

A few Senate Republicans have also indicated they might not vote for the spending measure unless it DACA recipients. Without these votes, Senate Republicans remained short of the [60](#) they need to approve the spending measure.

The political deadlock over immigration comes despite public support for DREAMers. A September 2017 poll by [Fox News](#) found that 83 percent of voters surveyed supported a pathway toward citizenship for immigrants of undocumented status, while 62 percent said it was important that Congress pass legislation addressing the fate of some 790,000 DACA recipients. [Other polls](#) echo these findings.

Several independent think tanks have also established the strong economic benefits of protecting DREAMers from deportation. On Thursday, the non-profit [American Action Forum](#) issued a [study](#) that found that DACA recipients have a positive fiscal impact of \$3.4

billion annually, and contribute roughly \$42 billion to annual GDP. An a studyby the Cato Institute, also released Thursday, found that deporting DREAMers would cost the federal government over \$60 billion and reduce economic growth over the next decade by \$280 billion.

Visit the Washington Post's guide to learn what a shutdown will mean to various federal workers and the services they provide.