

The Daily Item

More for You!

College president: Ending DACA is 'bad business'

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The Valley's two university presidents messaged their student bodies on Tuesday, coming out against President Trump's decision to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals executive order.

"Ending this program is bad business," said newly installed Susquehanna University President Jonathan Green. "DACA has been a source of opportunity for illegal immigrants who arrived in the United States as minors to apply for renewable two-year deferrals of deportation as they pursue citizenship. It has also been an opportunity for our nation to provide qualifying individuals, who have in many cases become naturalized in all but the legal sense, a mechanism to stay in the country that has become their home."

The nearly 800,000 individuals currently registered under DACA, Green said, have been rigorously vetted. "They must have arrived in the U.S. before reaching the age of 16; they must be enrolled in or have completed high school; and they may not have been convicted of a serious crime or deemed a threat to public safety or national security," he said.

"These aspiring young people," Green said, "are contributing to the workplace, in our university classrooms, and in the U.S. military. We need to celebrate these strivers, not end a program so filled with the hope and opportunity that has been at the center of our national identity for centuries."

News of Trump's decision compelled Bucknell President John Bravman to issue a campus-wide email, which was made public to The Daily Item.

College and university leaders expressed deep concern Monday about what an imminent Trump administration policy shift on immigration could mean for students who were brought to the United States as undocumented immigrants when they were children.

In the months leading up to this decision, Bravman noted that many of his peers at universities across the country "and I have strongly advocated for the continuation of DACA." He also said that he was committed to respecting and protecting a student's privacy.

Bravman cited a letter he wrote to leaders in Congress, in which he said "young people who benefit from DACA — children who had no control over how they arrived in the United States — are active, engaged and contributing members of higher education learning communities across the country. ... The individuals (DACA) protects add immeasurable value to our colleges and universities, our communities and our country as a whole."

Legislators Speak Out

U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey, a Pennsylvania Republican, issued a statement Tuesday agreeing that children who were brought to the United States illegally, at a young age, are not at fault "and deserve our support."

Toomey contends that President Obama did not have the legal authority to create the DACA program and to ignore enforcement of existing immigration law, and for that reason, supported Trump's decision.

"Congress needs to pass legislation to accommodate these young people while simultaneously addressing the other challenges within our deeply broken immigration system, including stopping dangerous sanctuary cities, strengthening border security, and cracking down on companies that hire people who are here illegally," he said.

Pennsylvania's other U.S. Senator, Bob Casey, called Trump's action "an insult to America and our values. This action is unjust, immoral and without regard to basic fairness. Tearing apart the lives of these young people will make our nation less safe, and harm our economy."

According to the CATO Institute, a political think-tank, deporting DACA recipients would result in a \$280 billion reduction in economic growth, and a loss of \$2 billion each year in state and local taxes.

U.S. House Rep. Tom Marino did not issue a comment on the DACA decision.

Smart politics?

Nick Clark, associate professor of political science, Susquehanna University, suggested Tuesday night that Trump's decision "could be construed as a smart political move. The president is increasingly at odds with the legislative branch, and not just Democrats on the Hill. This puts the onus on Congress to take some sort of deliberate action on the issue.

"If six months from now, Congress is unable or unwilling to come to a compromise," Clark said, "he can blame the legislative branch for again failing the American people."

Conversely, Clark said, conventional wisdom says this is not especially a smart political move because the block of Latino voters who would favor DACA is only growing over time.

"There seems to be a lot of sympathy for the young individuals affected by this policy on both sides of the aisle," he said. "The president has expressed such sympathies himself. That said, I think the action on DACA is consistent with his prior actions — a policy change favored by his base, hated by most Democrats and left-leaning independents, and not really embraced by Republicans and right-leaning independents."