



Where Erie's lawmakers stand on DACA

September 6, 2017

Pennsylvania's Congressional delegation has weighed in on President Donald Trump's decision to eliminate the Deferred Action for Children Arrivals (DACA) policy. Trump's decision would impact 800,000 people who were brought to the United States as children of undocumented immigrants. He has called on Congress to address the issue in the next six months before he begins phasing out the 2012 law. Their full responses:

U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, D-Pa.

"The 'Dreamers' are young people who have lived in our country since they were children. They have been law-abiding residents who have learned English, paid taxes and secured jobs that allow them to support themselves and their families. Our government promised them that they would be protected if they came forward and now President Trump is breaking that promise.

President Trump's action today is an insult to America and our values. This action is profoundly unjust, immoral and without regard for 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, deporting Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients would cost more than \$60 billion and would result in a \$280 billion reduction in economic growth over the next decade. The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy estimates that the 1.3 million young people enrolled in or eligible for DACA pay \$2 billion each year in state and local taxes.

"It's clear that Republicans in Washington and the Trump Administration are not serious about fixing the problem of illegal immigration, securing our border and reforming our immigration system. Instead, their only plan is to deport 11 million individuals, including 790,000 Dreamers. Congress should move immediately to pass the bipartisan Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, which would allow the Dreamers to become permanent residents if they meet the very stringent qualifications outlined in the bill."

U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa.

"Children who were brought to the United States illegally, at a young age, are not at fault and deserve our support. However, President Obama did not have the legal authority to create the DACA program and to ignore enforcement of existing immigration law. President Trump's decision to end this program, while giving Congress six months to come up with a legislative solution, is the right step.

"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."

U.S. Rep. Mike Kelly, R-3rd Dist.

“As you know, there is much being said about today’s major announcement by the Trump administration to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program first ordered by President Obama in 2012.

“I share President Trump’s sentiment, expressed (Tuesday), that children should not be punished for the actions of their parents and that ‘we are a nation of opportunity because we are a nation of laws.’ I also applaud Speaker Ryan’s commitment to upholding Congress’s role as the law-writing body within our government and his readiness to craft legislation that deals with the complex legal, security, and humanitarian aspects of immigration.

“Unfortunately, we are at this point because our previous president grew impatient with constitutional limits and attempted to unilaterally create new law. That fact remains: despite its best intentions, President Obama’s DACA executive order is unconstitutional. President Trump has now given Congress six months to decide on a policy that will allow the DACA order to come to a responsible end. Going forward, I will be examining all options before determining what Congress should specifically do.

“As I have stated many times before, the Constitution is not a suggestion. If President Obama had sincerely wanted to create a new immigration law during his tenure, then he should have worked with the legislative branch to do so. Instead, very regrettably, he overstepped his executive authority and created the policy crisis at hand by not following the rule of law.”

U.S. Rep. Glenn Thompson, R-5th Dist.

“In June of 2012, President Obama called DACA a temporary stopgap measure. Now it is time for Congress to debate the program and provide a legislative solution. Those individuals who were brought here as children, through no fault of their own, know no other country but the United States. Those who contribute to society and the economy should not be deported. But let me be clear: those who do not follow the letter of the law should be removed from the country immediately.

“Immigration reform is long overdue, and I look forward to working with Members on both sides of aisle and the administration to fix our immigration system, restore the rule of law, and ensure that America remains the beacon of light for so many people seeking peace, freedom, and prosperity.”