



# The past, present and future of DACA for KU students, explained

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In one of his first public messages since taking the office, Chancellor Douglas Girod expressed his support for DACA, a federal program President Donald Trump recently moved to end.

President Barack Obama started the program by executive order in 2012 to keep the government from deporting children of undocumented immigrants. The fate of these young people, including college students at the University, is now in the hands of Congress.

## **Past:**

*What is DACA?*

DACA stands for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. It is a program which allows undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children to obtain driver's licenses, enroll in college, and legally get a job. DACA protects them for two years and then they must apply for renewal.

*Why did it start?*

Obama did not want the government deporting thousands of young people. He created the program after Congress tried and failed to pass immigration reform bills that would allow young immigrants to stay in the U.S.

*Who does it impact?*

Some 800,000 young people who are able to work for normal wages and attend college without fear of deportation.

In order to be protected by DACA, an immigrant must have arrived in the U.S. before they turned 16 and prior to June 15, 2007. Those immigrants must either be in high school or have earned a high school diploma or GED.

Those who have committed felonies, significant misdemeanors, or more than three other misdemeanors are not eligible.

Immigrants can apply for DACA protection in order to go to school or work or as a means of avoiding deportation after the deportation process has started. As of Sept. 4, 690,000 immigrants were enrolled in the program.

Since its creation in 2012, 800,000 individuals have received benefits from it. Nearly 80 percent are from Mexico, but the other 20 percent come from countries all over the world. About two-thirds are 25 and younger.

*Does it provide a path to citizenship?*

No. DACA simply provides a way for individuals to remain in the country without fear of deportation. It does not provide a facilitated path to citizenship or a green card, a form of identification given to those with lawful permanent residence in the states. In order to obtain citizenship, DACA recipients must undergo the same process of anyone seeking to immigrate.

*What has been the impact on the country?*

DACA recipients contribute \$2 billion in taxes each year. Research from the Cato Institute estimates that ending DACA could cost the government up to \$280 billion in economic growth. This growth is the result of a group of Americans who were previously incapable of pursuing higher education and higher paid jobs as a result because they did not have papers.

Anguiano: Learn the facts about DACA before forming an opinion

Columnist Joey Anguiano argues that before deciding to be against Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, it's essential to educate yourself on the controversial program and President Donald Trump's move to end it.

**Present:**

*Where does DACA currently stand?*

On Sept. 5, President Trump announced that he was phasing out DACA. The program's protection for undocumented immigrants would end 60 days after that announcement - Nov. 4. He has urged Congress to take action protecting those currently in the program, but thus far no known steps have been taken by Congress.

No new applications are being accepted and all individuals currently enrolled in the program must renew their status before Oct. 5.

*What has KU said on the topic?*

In a news release on Sept. 5, Chancellor Girod affirmed the University's support for undocumented students and urged Congress to enact legislation protecting them. The University has created a website to provide resources to students and Student Legal Services has offered free assistance to undocumented students throughout the process.

*How are KU students affected?*

According to the most recent numbers, there are four students at the University known to be enrolled in DACA. However, there are believed to be more. The impact of phasing out the act on these students is uncertain until Congress acts.

University professor researches immigration policies beyond DACA

With recent executive action on immigration in the U.S., Dr. Cecilia Menjivar's research is helping educate the general public on immigration in the U.S.

### **Future:**

*What happens when DACA expires?*

When DACA expires on March 5, if Congress does not pass a law protecting individuals currently enrolled in the system, those individuals who have not renewed their status will be at risk of deportation.

Those who have renewed their status will have the remainder of their two-year period in the program. According to the Brookings Institute, a mass deportation of that kind would cost the country as much as \$10 billion, because the average cost of deportation for one individual is \$12,500.

*What are the options being discussed by Congress?*

DREAM Act: This is primarily backed by congressional Democrats would provide a green card to all individuals currently protected by DACA. Furthermore it would create a framework for those individuals to have a path to citizenship. The DREAM Act would provide these benefits to undocumented immigrants brought to the country before the age of 18.

SUCCEED Act: Congressional Republicans have suggested the SUCCEED Act as their own alternative to the DREAM Act. The act would provide conditional status to individuals who arrived before the age of 16 if they are seeking employment, higher education or serving in the military. After five years on this status, they will be eligible to apply for another 5 years, after which they can seek a green card and, ultimately, citizenship.

Many Republican members of Congress have indicated that they will not agree to either of these measures without increased border security being passed as well.