

# Mail Tribune

## Editorial: Why the U.S. should keep Dreamers here

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It's no surprise that Southern Oregon University President Linda Schott has joined a national coalition of college and university leaders supporting immigrant students regardless of their legal status. SOU has a close relationship with the University of Guanajuato, Mexico, thanks to Ashland's sister-city relationship. Specifically, Schott is championing the cause of students enrolled in the DACA program, which allows immigrants brought here as children to avoid deportation while pursuing a college education.

The arguments in favor of leniency toward the roughly 800,000 young people eligible for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program are well-known by now: These are teenagers and young adults brought to this country by their parents, here without legal authorization through no fault of their own. Many know no other country; some speak only English and have never even visited their native land. What's more, to be eligible for DACA, they must be enrolled in school or have graduated. Those with criminal convictions are not eligible.

But there is another reason why it makes sense to allow "Dreamers," as they are known, to stay here and attend college, as many are doing. It benefits the United States economy. And not just a little.

A study completed last January by the Cato Institute — hardly a bastion of liberal thought — calculated that ending the DACA program would cost the U.S. economy \$215 billion over 10 years. The cost to the government in lost tax revenue alone would be \$60 billion, the study concluded.

Oregon's share of that cost would be \$384 million to the state budget and \$1.4 billion overall.

This is because, unlike immigrants in general, DACA recipients are better educated and have better jobs, so they pay more taxes.

The most common criticism of undocumented immigrants is that they take jobs from American citizens. In the case of Dreamers, they are not taking low-skill jobs but positions requiring education and skills — jobs any American citizen is free to compete for. In fact, Dreamers are statistically more likely to stay in college once they start.

The Cato study's authors wrote that "The college attrition rate of DACA recipients is miniscule compared to domestic students, an indication of the exceptional caliber of the DACA students and their degree of motivation, no doubt partly driven by the fact that dropping out of school for them can result in deportation."

**What's your view?**

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President Donald Trump, who has alternately criticized and praised DACA, announced in September that he would end the program, created by executive order under President Barack Obama, in March unless Congress acts to save it. Congress should do so. In the meantime, Schott and her academic colleagues across the country will rightly continue to champion the cause of DACA students.