

## **Pentagon Vows to Fight for Dreamers in Uniform**

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The 800 to 900 Dreamers serving in the US military slated for deportation in March unless the government extends the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program have been given a promise by the head of the Pentagon to fight on their behalf.

"We would always stand by one of our own people," US Defense Secretary James Mattis said Thursday when asked about the status of Dreamers in uniform. DACA, a policy instituted by US President Barack Obama to allow minors who arrived in the country illegally to stay in the US and obtain work permits on a two-year, renewable basis, expires March 5, at which point the Dreamers become eligible for deportation.

Mattis explained that he has received confirmation from the Department of Homeland Security that anyone with DACA status in the military will not be forced to leave the US.

Pentagon spokesperson Dana White told reporters Thursday that non-civilian Dreamers are "within the purview" of the Justice Department and DHS. "We'll work with them," she said, noting that with regard to Dreamers in the military, "we respect their service and we'll continue to do that."

US President Donald Trump nullified the DACA policy in September, accelerating the pace at which immigrants in the US arriving under DACA would lose certain legal protections. The White House memo issued states that immigrants who don't have work permits renewed by last October should "use the remaining time on their work authorizations to prepare for and arrange their departure from the United States."

Trump began and ended his campaign with patent misrepresentations about illegal immigrants as being more prone to crime, a claim that "is hard to find" evidence for, according to a columnist at the conservative Fox News outlet.

A concern promoted by Trump that illegal immigrants are acting as a drain on the economy is similarly difficult to prove, economists say. In fact, according to Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, the opposite is true. "If you want to raise the economy's underlying growth rate, we should be increasing immigration, not reducing it," Zandi told the AP in September.

The libertarian Cato Institute forecasts that the US economy would be worse off without the Dreamers' participation, to the tune of about \$280 billion over 10 years.

There are an estimated 800,000 people in the US qualifying as Dreamers. Congress has not been able to pass a replacement plan so far.