



April 8, 2020

The Honorable Kamala Harris
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Harris:

On behalf of the Latino Community Foundation, the only statewide foundation focused on unleashing the civic and economic power of Latinos, **I write to call upon your leadership to swiftly address the looming predicament facing the nearly 700,000 recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.**

In the next few weeks, the United States Supreme Court will decide the fate of DACA. As a program that has provided temporary deportation relief and work authorization to its recipients, any decision that falls short of safeguarding these basic protections for these brave and resilient individuals will compromise our country's public health, economy, and national security in the face of COVID-19. Here's why:

DACA Recipients are on the Frontlines of America's Healthcare Response to COVID-19

According to the [Association of American Medical Colleges](#), there are 27,000 DACA recipients who currently work in the healthcare sector in our country. When COVID-19 has prompted state and local public health officials to recall former nurses, doctors, and other health practitioners to the front lines to deal with an expected surge of patients, it is antithetical to the goal of protecting the public health of our residents if DACA recipients are unable to legally provide vital healthcare duties should this program end. Our health systems will falter, and millions of sick patients will be deprived of necessary services during this national emergency. In the months and years ahead, as we better understand the challenges that COVID-19 presents to the United States and California, it is imperative that we retain this talent and willingness to heroically serve.

The Strength of the American Economy Hinges on DACA Recipient Contributions

The onset of COVID-19 has already engendered large unemployment claims and business losses across this country. But the threat of losing hundreds of thousands of individuals from participating in the American economy because of the termination of the DACA program would further threaten the country's ability to quickly recover. In California alone, DACA recipients contribute **\$3.1B** in federal, state and local taxes. They also procure **\$8B** in spending power. Taken together, DACA recipients are a critical revenue source that fund America's educational, health, and infrastructure projects and services, as well as serve as conduits to greater economic activity and opportunities for America's business sector. It is economically unsound to lose these individuals from participating meaningfully in the American economy as we begin to understand the economic impact of COVID-19.

DACA Servicemembers are Critical to the National Security Response to COVID-19

As governors across the nation are deploying the use of their National Guard units to establish COVID-

19 testing sites, distribute food and medical supplies, and support public safety, among the ranks in these units are DACA recipients who are serving fearlessly in the face of this global pandemic. According to data from the Department of Homeland Security, [over 800](#) DACA recipients are either currently serving in the military or who have signed contracts to serve. It is the daily courageous acts of these DACA servicemembers and their peers that are helping communities across the country mitigate the devastating impacts of COVID-19. Put simply, we cannot afford to lose a single servicemember when their services are required now more than ever to address the growing concerns of COVID-19.

The Answer is Clear: It's Time to Find Permanent Solutions for DACA Recipients

As a philanthropic institution focused on strengthening Latino communities across this great state, we believe that this country should honor the hard-work, grit, and courage of our DACA recipients. Regardless of the imminent decision from the United States Supreme Court on the future of the DACA program, we call on you to find a permanent solution for these individuals that takes into the public health, economic, and security needs of our state and nation in the age of COVID-19.

Upon your return from the Congressional Easter Recess, we urge you to consider reforms that:

- Grant permanent residency status to DACA recipients so that they can live and work in our country.
- Halt any deportation removals to keep them and their families together.
- Provide a pathway to citizenship to ensure that DACA recipients can contribute to the economic growth of our country and participate in our democracy as engaged voters.

As a country that has long stood for the equality of all people, we implore that you protect the people we call our friends and our family. The time for action is now.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Martinez Garcel
CEO
Latino Community Foundation
San Francisco, CA