

February 21, 2017

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Chairman
Judiciary Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member
Judiciary Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Feinstein, Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers:

As public school educators and leaders of institutions of higher education, we feel it is our duty and responsibility to educate all children who enroll in our schools, regardless of their immigration status. In doing so, we want to see all our students achieve their dreams to make our country as strong as it can be. To allow one important group of young people to do that, we ask you to spur the passage of the bipartisan *BRIDGE (Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy) Act*.

The BRIDGE Act would maintain temporary relief from deportation and employment authorization to individuals who are eligible for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals ("DACA") program. Since the advent of this opportunity in 2012, we have seen firsthand the benefits of this program for our students, institutions, and communities. These high-achieving students are pursuing careers in business, education, health care, and the military, to name but a few sectors benefitting from the influx of new talent. A [2015 survey](#) from the National Immigration Law Center shows that 76 percent of DACA recipients work and 65 percent are in school; 92 percent said that DACA allowed them to pursue new educational opportunities.^[1] (Before DACA, only 44 percent of these young people had jobs.) [Another survey](#) of DACA students enrolled in college shows that students were pursuing education in a variety of institutions and programs (over a quarter are pursuing STEM majors).^[2]

The BRIDGE Act would allow Congress to create a proper constitutional process for these fully vetted young people to continue to work, study, and be protected from deportation for three years while Congress debates broader legislation to fix our nation's immigration system. Applicants would be required to pay a reasonable fee, undergo criminal background checks, and meet several eligibility criteria indicating that they came to the United States as minors, grew up in this country, have pursued an education or career in the military, have not committed any serious crimes, and do not pose a threat to our country.

Now is the time for action. President Trump has said that he wants to "work something out" for these students "that's going to make people happy and proud." Speaker Ryan has also signaled that

^[1] https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/DACA-Wong_NILC_CAP-Codebook-PDF.pdf

^[2] <http://www.undocuscholars.org/assets/undocuscholarsreport2015.pdf>

a “humane” legislative solution should be sought. We believe the BRIDGE Act is the appropriate and necessary solution. These young people deserve to remain in the only country they call home. All of us stand to benefit from the many contributions they will make to America that the BRIDGE Act can help make possible.

Sincerely,

Achievement First
Achievement Network
Alliance-College Ready Public Schools
Alpha Public Schools
AppleTree Institute
Aspire Public Schools
Aspire University
Bennington College
Beyond 12
Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy, Rhode Island
Tom Boasberg, Superintendent, Denver Public Schools
Breakthrough Schools
Brooke Charter Schools
California Charter Schools Association
Center City Public Charter Schools
Chancellor of Rutgers University-Newark
Citizens of the World Charter Schools
Citizen Schools
College Beyond
College Forward
College Possible
College Track
Coney Island Preparatory Public Charter School
DC Prep Public Charter Schools
Dillard University
DSST Public Schools
East End Preparatory Charter School
Ednovate
Educate78
Education for Change Public Schools
Education Forward DC
Educators For Excellence
Emory University
Envision Education
Family Independence Initiative
Franklin & Marshall College
Gestalt Community Schools
GO Public Schools
Dr. Deborah Gist, Superintendent, Tulsa Public Schools
Genesys Works
Green Dot Public Schools
Hendrix College
iMentor

Farley Herzek, President, Kingsborough Community College
Idaho Charter School Network
IDEA Public Schools
Innovate Schools
Jumpstart
Keegan Company
Kevin Hall, Charter School Growth Fund
KIPP
Laura and John Arnold Foundation
LEAD Public Schools
LEARN Charter School Network
Lighthouse Community Public Schools
Dr. Wallace D. Loh, President of the University of Maryland, College Park
Lycoming College
Mastery Charter Schools
Match Education
Montessori for All
Monument Academy
Moonshot edVentures
Nashville Classical Charter School
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
New Schools for Baton Rouge
New Schools for Chicago
New Schools for New Orleans
Noble Network of Charter Schools
Notre Dame de Namur University
Phoebe A. Haddon – Chancellor, Rutgers-Camden University
Pomona College
PowerMyLearning
Carol Quillen, President, Davidson College
Reframe Labs
RePublic Schools
Rice University
RISE Colorado
Rocketship Education
Rocky Mountain Prep
Roots Elementary
Rosemont College
Saint Edward's University
Schools That Can Milwaukee
Stacey Childress, Chief Executive Officer, New Schools Venture Fund
Stand for Children
STRIVE Collegiate Academy, Nashville
STRIVE Prep
Success Academy Charter Schools
Summit Public Schools
Teach for America
Thurgood Marshall Academy
TNTP
Transcend Education

Trinity Washington University
Trinity University
Uncommon Schools
University of Notre Dame
UP Education Network
Uplift Education
uAspire
Valor Collegiate Academies
Visible Men Academy
Washington Leadership Academy
Year Up
YES Prep

cc: President Trump, Vice President Pence, Secretary Kelly, Members of the Judiciary Committee,
and Members of the Education Committee, Secretary of Education DeVos