

## Statement of the Missouri Catholic Conference Regarding Enactment of New DACA Program

We, the Catholic Bishops of Missouri, call on the Missouri Congressional delegation to work closely with other members of Congress to pass legislation that will establish a new Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that will allow young adults who were brought into the United States as children to stay in this country and establish citizenship.

DACA was first established in 2012 by an executive order issued by President Obama. Since its inception, many have questioned whether DACA was constitutional and suggested that only Congress has the authority to create such a program. Now, with the U.S. Justice Department moving to end DACA, this legal question is moot. The question that remains is whether Congress, which certainly has the authority, will enact a new DACA program that is based upon an act of Congress.

We strongly support Congressional action; we believe the arguments for a new DACA program are compelling.

These young adults came to the U.S. as young children. Most have never known any home but this country. They should not be blamed for decisions taken by their parents or guardians to enter the U.S. without proper papers. To send these young people back to the country of their parent's origin would not represent the spirit of compassion and welcoming for which our country is so justly revered around the world, nor would such deportations reflect our Judeo-Christian teachings which calls upon us to welcome the stranger as our brother and sister.

Enacting a new DACA program, however, would not only be compassionate, it would benefit the common good. These young people are now working, starting businesses and otherwise contributing in many ways to our local communities. In deporting them we harm not just them, but ourselves. We would be depriving our country of the many God-given talents that these young adults offer for the good of all of us.

The Obama executive order and the accompanying legal controversy are now a thing of the past. We look to the future and we ask the Missouri Congressional delegation to do the same. We, therefore, urge the Missouri delegation to work with other members of Congress to enact a new DACA program.

With our prayers, we are sincerely yours in Christ,

### CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF MISSOURI



Handwritten signature of Robert J. Carlson in black ink.

Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson  
Executive Chairman  
Archbishop of St. Louis



Handwritten signature of James V. Johnston, Jr. in black ink.

Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.  
Vice Chairman  
Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph



Handwritten signature of John R. Gaydos in black ink.

Most Reverend John R. Gaydos  
General Chairman  
Bishop of Jefferson City



Handwritten signature of Edward M. Rice in black ink.

Most Reverend Edward M. Rice  
Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau

Approved September 5, 2017