

## **A Statement in Support of the Dream Act of 2017 by the Coalition of Religious Leaders**

The Coalition of Religious Leaders here in New Jersey expresses their deep concern and opposition to President Trump's plan to phase out the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program. We believe that this action is a clear violation of our faith principles of hospitality, compassion and justice. We believe the President's decision to end this program threatens the emotional, social, and economic stability for millions of individuals and tears at the fabric of our country. The young people, who have been protected from deportation by DACA, attend our schools, serve in our military, are members of our faith communities, and make significant contributions to our economy. Their hopes and dreams are no different from the children who are born here and there is no legitimate reason for inflicting this needless suffering on these children. Their only crime, if you even call it that, was that they lovingly and obediently accompanied their parents in pursuit of the dream of freedom and opportunity.

We, the Religious Leaders of New Jersey deeply lament the pain and fear that so many young immigrants are experiencing in the wake of the President's decision to terminate the DACA Program. We condemn this shameful and unacceptable position. We will not stand by as DACA youth, as well as undocumented immigrants, are blamed for the economic and social problems facing our nation.

We call upon members of our New Jersey Congressional delegation to support the Dream Act of 2017 (S 1615/HR 3440). This act will protect almost 800,000 youth who entered the United States as children and know America as their only home. Tens of thousands dreamers call New Jersey home.

Our respective faiths call us to welcome the dreamer, and we stand with them in this moment of time. It is for us a moral imperative that we call upon our representatives in Congress to support the Dream Act of 2017. We call upon our member congregations to pray and advocate for the dreamer and to uphold the dignity of every person and work for the common good. Let us exemplify our best ideals and beliefs.