

## JUSTICE NEWS

### Attorney General Sessions Delivers Remarks on DACA

Washington, DC ~ Tuesday, September 5, 2017

---

#### Remarks as prepared for delivery

Good morning. I am here today to announce that the program known as DACA that was effectuated under the Obama Administration is being rescinded.

The DACA program was implemented in 2012 and essentially provided a legal status for recipients for a renewable two-year term, work authorization and other benefits, including participation in the social security program, to 800,000 mostly-adult illegal aliens.

This policy was implemented unilaterally to great controversy and legal concern after Congress rejected legislative proposals to extend similar benefits on numerous occasions to this same group of illegal aliens.

In other words, the executive branch, through DACA, deliberately sought to achieve what the legislative branch specifically refused to authorize on multiple occasions. Such an open-ended circumvention of immigration laws was an unconstitutional exercise of authority by the Executive Branch.

The effect of this unilateral executive amnesty, among other things, contributed to a surge of unaccompanied minors on the southern border that yielded terrible humanitarian consequences. It also denied jobs to hundreds of thousands of Americans by allowing those same jobs to go to illegal aliens.

We inherited from our Founders—and have advanced—an unsurpassed legal heritage, which is the foundation of our freedom, safety, and prosperity.

As the Attorney General, it is my duty to ensure that the laws of the United States are enforced and that the Constitutional order is upheld.

No greater good can be done for the overall health and well-being of our Republic, than preserving and strengthening the impartial rule of law. Societies where the rule of law is treasured are societies that tend to flourish and succeed.

Societies where the rule of law is subject to political whims and personal biases tend to become societies afflicted by corruption, poverty, and human suffering.

To have a lawful system of immigration that serves the national interest, we cannot admit everyone who would like to come here. That is an open border policy and the American people have rightly rejected it.

Therefore, the nation must set and enforce a limit on how many immigrants we admit each year and that means all can not be accepted.

This does not mean they are bad people or that our nation disrespects or demeans them in any way. It means we are properly enforcing our laws as Congress has passed them.

It is with these principles and duties in mind, and in light of imminent litigation, that we reviewed the Obama Administration's DACA policy.

Our collective wisdom is that the policy is vulnerable to the same legal and constitutional challenges that the courts recognized with respect to the DAPA program, which was enjoined on a nationwide basis in a decision affirmed by the

Fifth Circuit.

The Fifth Circuit specifically concluded that DACA had not been implemented in a fashion that allowed sufficient discretion, and that DAPA was “foreclosed by Congress’s careful plan.”

In other words, it was inconsistent with the Constitution’s separation of powers. That decision was affirmed by the Supreme Court by an equally divided vote.

If we were to keep the Obama Administration’s executive amnesty policy, the likeliest outcome is that it would be enjoined just as was DAPA. The Department of Justice has advised the President and the Department of Homeland Security that DHS should begin an orderly, lawful wind down, including the cancellation of the memo that authorized this program.

Acting Secretary Duke has chosen, appropriately, to initiate a wind down process. This will enable DHS to conduct an orderly change and fulfill the desire of this administration to create a time period for Congress to act—should it so choose. We firmly believe this is the responsible path.

Simply put, if we are to further our goal of strengthening the constitutional order and the rule of law in America, the Department of Justice cannot defend this type of overreach.

George Washington University Law School Professor Jonathan Turley in testimony before the House Judiciary Committee was clear about the enormous constitutional infirmities raised by these policies.

He said: “In ordering this blanket exception, President Obama was nullifying part of a law that he simply disagreed with. ....If a president can claim sweeping discretion to suspend key federal laws, the entire legislative process becomes little more than a pretense...The circumvention of the legislative process not only undermines the authority of this branch but destabilizes the tripartite system as a whole.”

Ending the previous Administration’s disrespect for the legislative process is an important first step. All immigration policies should serve the interests of the people of the United States—lawful immigrant and native born alike.

Congress should carefully and thoughtfully pursue the types of reforms that are right for the American people. Our nation is comprised of good and decent people who want their government’s leaders to fulfill their promises and advance an immigration policy that serves the national interest.

We are a people of compassion and we are a people of law. But there is nothing compassionate about the failure to enforce immigration laws.

Enforcing the law saves lives, protects communities and taxpayers, and prevents human suffering. Failure to enforce the laws in the past has put our nation at risk of crime, violence and even terrorism.

The compassionate thing is to end the lawlessness, enforce our laws, and, if Congress chooses to make changes to those laws, to do so through the process set forth by our Founders in a way that advances the interest of the nation.

That is what the President has promised to do and has delivered to the American people.

Under President Trump’s leadership, this administration has made great progress in the last few months toward establishing a lawful and constitutional immigration system. This makes us safer and more secure.

It will further economically the lives of millions who are struggling. And it will enable our country to more effectively teach new immigrants about our system of government and assimilate them to the cultural understandings that support it.

The substantial progress in reducing illegal immigration at our border seen in recent months is almost entirely the product of the leadership of President Trump and his inspired federal immigration officers. But the problem is not solved. And without more action, we could see illegality rise again rather than be eliminated.

As a candidate, and now in office, President Trump has offered specific ideas and legislative solutions that will protect American workers, increase wages and salaries, defend our national security, ensure the public safety, and increase

AIILA Doc. No. 17090531. (Posted 9/5/17)

the general well-being of the American people.

He has worked closely with many members of Congress, including in the introduction of the RAISE Act, which would produce enormous benefits for our country. This is how our democratic process works.

There are many powerful interest groups in this country and every one of them has a constitutional right to advocate their views and represent whomever they choose.

But the Department of Justice does not represent any narrow interest or any subset of the American people. We represent all of the American people and protect the integrity of our Constitution. That is our charge.

We at Department of Justice are proud and honored to work to advance this vision for America and to do our best each day to ensure the safety and security of the American people.

Thank you.

---

**Speaker:**

Attorney General Jeff Sessions

**Attachment(s):**

Download ag\_letter\_re\_daca.pdf

**Topic(s):**

Immigration

**Component(s):**

Office of the Attorney General

*Updated September 5, 2017*