

U.S. Bishops' Migration chairman expresses solidarity with Dreamers on DACA's 10th anniversary, calls for 'long-awaited inflection point'

WASHINGTON – June 15, 2022 marks 10 years since the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was created through executive action. DACA allows certain undocumented immigrants who entered the United States as children — commonly referred to as “Dreamers” — to remain in the country, subject to several requirements. DACA does not provide legal status, nor does it create a pathway to citizenship, but it does temporarily protect recipients from removal and make them eligible for work authorization, among other benefits. DACA was declared unlawful by a federal district court in July 2021, halting new applications and threatening protection for current beneficiaries of the program.

Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville, auxiliary bishop of Washington and chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration, issued the following statement:

“In the time since DACA was created, its beneficiaries have come to be known for their abundant contributions to our society. But after a decade of temporary relief, most DACA recipients still face uncertainty about their future in this country, to say nothing of their families, including hundreds of thousands of U.S.-citizen children, employers, and the communities that depend on them. For those confronted by this reality, the Church remains committed to walking with you and seeing this injustice remedied, furthering God's plan, which Pope Francis reminds us ‘is essentially inclusive and gives priority to those living on the existential peripheries.’

“DACA was never a cure for the underlying challenges facing Dreamers, but it was a welcome step toward recognizing their inherent dignity and unrealized potential. Only Congress can ensure the full integration of this population. We therefore urge legislators to make this moment the long-awaited inflection point that leads to a permanent solution for all Dreamers — one of many steps to address an immigration system in desperate need of reform.”

There are currently multiple bills pending before Congress that would provide permanent relief to Dreamers, including the American Dream and Promise Act (H.R. 6) and the Dream Act (S. 264), both of which have been endorsed by the USCCB. Last year, Bishop Dorsonville submitted written testimony for a hearing held by the Senate Judiciary Committee on the American Dream and Promise Act, which passed with bipartisan support in the House of Representatives. He also

appeared in a recent video discussing DACA's tenth anniversary, together with a current DACA recipient from the Archdiocese of Washington.