



Bar Removal of Individuals Who Dream of Growing our Economy Act (BRIDGE Act)

The Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy (BRIDGE) Act was introduced to provide temporary relief from deportation and employment authorizations to individuals who are eligible for the Department of Homeland Security's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.¹ The introduction of this legislation comes at a moment where the repeal or roll-back of DACA is being considered. With more than 750,000 individuals in the DACA program, the estimated fiscal cost of deporting these individuals would be over \$60 billion to the federal government along with an estimated \$280 billion reduction in economic growth over the next decade.² Not only does this legislation provide protection for undocumented individuals, it also provides large economic protections for the United States.

Understanding the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

The DACA program, established in 2012 under President Obama, via executive action, provides temporary protection and work authorization to eligible young people who entered the United States as children.³ DACA does not provide lawful status or a pathway to permanent residence or citizenship, but does protect people with DACA status from being removed from the United States for a two-year period and is subject to renewal. Protection under DACA is contingent on registering with the government, paying a \$465 fee, and passing a criminal background check.³ More than 752,000 young people have obtained DACA status since the creation of the program in 2012, many of whom are enrolled in college within the United States.⁴ Of the 46 percent of DACA-eligible students currently in school, 70 percent are pursuing a bachelor's degree or higher.⁵ Due to DACA, many individuals have been able to pursue educational opportunities.

Moving from Executive Action to Legislation

While the BRIDGE Act has very similar provisions to the Executive Order of DACA, it is legislation that would allow the provisions to become law and would remain in effect until Congress either changed or repealed them.¹ Having law presented for this issue would provide more protection to applicants for provisional protected presence than is currently obtained under DACA. The legislation would make it possible for people who meet certain criteria to apply for and receive provisional protected presence and work authorizations for a three-year period.¹

The BRIDGE Act would also be applied to a broader group of young, undocumented immigrants who may not currently have DACA status. For example, the BRIDGE Act could cover someone who meets all of the DACA eligibility criteria but is under 15, the current age requirement of DACA. The BRIDGE Act enacts tougher confidentiality protections that would bar personal information such as the immigrants' home addresses from being used for deportation purposes.¹ The goal of this provision is to ensure that parents of DACA beneficiaries would not be deported.

While the BRIDGE Act is not a permanent solution to protecting young, undocumented people, it is a means to ensure they have the opportunity to access quality education within the United States.

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¹ BRIDGE Act, S. 128, 115th Cong. (2017). ; BRIDGE Act, HR 496, 115th Cong. (2017). Introduced by Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Dick Durbin (D-IL); and Representatives Mike Coffman (CO-06) and Luis V. Gutierrez (IL-04).

² Brannon, Ike. (2017). The Economic and Fiscal Impact of Repealing DACA. Cato Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.cato.org/blog/economic-fiscal-impact-repealing-daca>

³ US Department of Homeland Security. (2016). Consideration of Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals. Retrieved from <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/consideration-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca>

⁴ Mathema, Silva. (2017). Ending DACA Will Cost States Billions of Dollars. Center for American Progress. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2017/01/09/296125/ending-daca-will-cost-states-billions-of-dollars/>

⁵ Wong et al. (2016). New Study of DACA Beneficiaries Shows Positive Economic and Educational Outcomes. Center for American Progress. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2016/10/18/146290/new-study-of-daca-beneficiaries-shows-positive-economic-and-educational-outcomes/>