



EVANGELICAL IMMIGRATION table.

June 12, 2022



Dear Members of Congress,



Ten years ago, a group of nationally prominent evangelical Christian leaders gathered on Capitol Hill to launch the Evangelical Immigration Table. They called for bipartisan immigration reforms guided by a series of biblically-informed principles that have since been affirmed by thousands of evangelical Christians, including an incredibly broad range of evangelical denominational leaders, parachurch ministry executives, Christian college and seminary presidents, local pastors of congregations from small to among the largest in the country and lay people from every state in the country.



We're writing to remind you of those principles, which we continue to affirm and believe to be even more timely now than they were a decade ago:

As evangelical Christian leaders, we call for a bipartisan solution on immigration that:

- Respects the God-given dignity of every person
- Protects the unity of the immediate family
- Respects the rule of law
- Guarantees secure national borders
- Ensures fairness to taxpayers
- Establishes a path toward legal status and/or citizenship for those who qualify and who wish to become permanent residents



Three days after that statement was initially released in June 2012, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced the creation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, allowing certain undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children the opportunity to request a temporary but renewable protection from deportation and authorization to work lawfully in the U.S.



Over the past decade, DACA has allowed hundreds of thousands of young people – including many who are integral members of evangelical churches, campuses and organizations – the opportunity to pursue their dreams, support their families and serve their communities.



But DACA was originally envisioned as a temporary measure, and ten years after it was announced, it's clear that it is past time for a permanent solution for Dreamers – one that only Congress can provide.



The DACA program is currently facing legal challenges, making it likely that current DACA beneficiaries will have their work authorization withdrawn in the coming year, harming them, their families, their employers and a national economy that relies upon their many contributions. The DACA program has already been closed to new applicants – including a cohort of people who were too young to apply for DACA in the past, whose ability to pursue higher education and/or careers now is in limbo.

Guided by the same core principles that have guided evangelical Christians for a decade, we are writing to implore you to act now to ensure that Dreamers who arrived in the U.S. as children have the opportunity to pursue permanent legal status and eventual citizenship, to be recognized formally as belonging within the United States of America, the country in which most of them have lived the majority of their lives and the only country which some of them can even remember.

Ultimately, of course, we need broader reforms to our immigration system consistent with the principles we have affirmed. But the current legal challenges facing the DACA program make passing a permanent solution for Dreamers a particularly urgent priority, the success of which would disprove the inside-the-beltway presumption that bipartisan consensus on immigration policies is no longer possible and, in doing so, build resolve to address broader immigration policy changes. After all, there is incredibly broad consensus among your constituents: if paired with two other policy priorities that are also consistent with evangelicals' principles – improvements to border security and reforms to ensure a reliable, legal agricultural workforce – a remarkable 82% of evangelical Christians say they support action on these three priorities, as do more than three-quarters of all Republicans, Independents and Democrats.

The Scriptures implore us: “Do not withhold good to those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, ‘Come back tomorrow and I’ll give it to you’ — when you already have it with you” (Proverbs 3:27-28). As Members of Congress, it is in your power – and your power alone – to finally resolve the plight of Dreamers, and you must not defer action further on this responsibility when you have the authority to resolve the issue this year.

Respectfully,

Evangelical Immigration Table Organizations:

Bethany Christian Services
Council for Christian Colleges and Universities
Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention
Faith and Community Empowerment
National Association of Evangelicals
National Latino Evangelical Coalition
The Wesleyan Church
World Relief
World Vision