

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Majority Leader
United States House of Representatives

June 18, 2020

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

In light of the Supreme Court's decision on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), we as organizations supporting military service members and veterans write to ask you to find a permanent legislative solution for Dreamers. Dreamers are undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children. Dreamers, who often have only known the U.S. as home, are working to make the United States stronger. We urge bipartisan immigration solutions that strengthen our national security, enhance our military readiness, and support our immigrant service members and their families.

We support veterans who came to the United States as refugees or as immigrants who joined the U.S. Armed Forces out of a sense of gratitude and duty they felt toward the United States. They have served bravely in our military from as early as the Revolutionary War, deployed to the far corners of the world, and many continue to serve and to lead in their communities here at home. Through the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest (MAVNI) program, Dreamers have served in the Armed Forces and provided essential translation and medical skills. Dreamers could continue to play a vital role in the military's ability to reach its recruiting goals. A permanent legislative solution for Dreamers will allow them to fill important roles in the Armed Forces.

A DACA fix would allow nearly 690,000 Dreamers, brought to the United States as children, to continue contributing to our economy and our communities, not just the military. More than 97 percent of these young women and men are currently in school or in the workforce; many are on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19. Some 800 have enlisted in our armed forces through MAVNI, many possessing skills critical to our military effectiveness – medical training, for example, or cultural competencies that support our global strategic interests.

There are DACA recipients serving as student leaders in Junior ROTC programs across the country. And there are many young Dreamers who hope to one day have the opportunity to

enlist in the U.S. military; a 2010 report estimated some 70,000 Dreamers could be potential enlistees if a legislative solution was enacted.

We ask Congress to pass a permanent, legislative solution that allows Dreamers the ability to obtain lawful permanent status and, eventually, earn the ability to become naturalized U.S. citizens. Young undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children should be permitted to make America their permanent home and, if they so choose, to serve their country through military service. We ask that the 800 DACA recipients who have recently served or are currently serving in our military be able to continue to serve. We ask that any Dreamer solution include a military path for DACA recipients and other Dreamers to gain permanent legal status. We ask that DACA recipients who have served or are currently serving in the Armed Forces be granted access to earned benefits such as care for service-related conditions, transitional programs and “parole in place,” and that they be encouraged to take advantage of the existing fast track to citizenship. We must ensure that regardless of their immigration status, their service to our country will be recognized and they will receive the military and veterans benefits they deserve.

Dreamers are part of the next generation of patriotic and hardworking Americans. We must give these young people the opportunity to remain here and fully contribute to our nation, including, if they so choose, through military service.

Sincerely,

AILA Military Assistance Program

American GI Forum of the United States

Association of Military Surgeons of the U.S. (AMSUS)

Blue Star Families

Chief Warrant and Warrant Officers Association, U.S. Coast Guard

Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

Military Chaplain’s Association

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

National Military Family Association

Service Women’s Action Network

U.S. Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association & Enlisted Association

United States Army Warrant Officers Association

Veterans for American Ideals

Veterans for New Americans