



USA Act, Dream Act, & the Need for Immediate Legislative Action

- H.R. 4796, the Uniting and Securing America (USA) Act of 2018, was introduced by Rep. Will Hurd (R-TX) and Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-CA) in the House of Representatives and has more than 50 bipartisan co-sponsors.
- The USA Act would protect and provide Dreamers with a path to citizenship as long as they satisfy residency, age and education, military or employment requirements. Additionally, H.R. 4796 augments border security with the use of new technology; and increases staffing resources for immigration courts to carry out their work.
- The USA Act, is a compromise bill that while not perfect, is one step our country can take in the direction of protecting Dreamers now. The border security measures in the USA Act, as currently written, are reasonable and do not include the building of the Wall. The Catholic Bishops will not continue support for the USA Act if there are substantive changes or additions in interior enforcement, eradication of protection of unaccompanied children and asylum seekers and cuts to family-based immigration.
- The Bishops still support the Dream Act and will continue to advocate for the Dream Act as it offers the most protections to Dreamers. As Catholics, we will continue to call for the Dream Act and work for its fulfilment and implementation.
- The Bishops support and will advocate for the DREAM Act and the USA Act, both of which provide the path to citizenship for 1.8 million Dreamers. Most importantly, the Catholic Church, from grassroots to grasstops, will look to increase its advocacy on the House of Representatives to attempt to ensure that both of these bills, the DREAM Act and the USA Act, will have the ability to be debated on and voted on by Congress in the short term future.
- The Bishops see the suffering of Dreamers and their families every day and they know the uncertainty that Dreamers face about their futures. It is with this anxiety of their

parishoners in mind that the Bishops look to increase their advocacy in this moment to ensure that Congress feels pressure to act NOW not in several months.

- Dreamers' lives have had to live with uncertainty for far too long. These young adults are currently contributing to:
 - o our economy as workers and consumers,
 - o the cultural tapestry of America,
 - o the defense of our country by serving in the military.
- Dreamers are future doctors, first responders, teachers, military personnel, and Catholic priests.
- Dreamers and TPS recipients and their families worship with us in our parishes and are full participants in our churches.
- DACA and TPS recipients have already been (extremely) vetted by our government. Their reviews have included criminal background examinations, confirmation of previous addresses and schools attended, and, in many cases, financial records checks.
- Many of the immigrants that stand to benefit from the USA Act have U.S. citizen children and/or spouses. Without legal status, families will be subject to separation through deportation.
- As Catholics, we stand in solidarity with these young people who are hard working, enterprising and law-abiding members of our communities.
- We are a nation of both immigrants AND compassion. We must continue the former and demonstrate the latter by doing the right thing for our neighbors.
- We are also a nation of laws that embraces fairness and access to due process. The requirements in the USA Act to improve staffing at immigration courts are a nod to that commitment to fairness and the right to “have your day in court.”
- The Catholic bishops have long implored for the U.S. government to address the root causes of irregular migration. The USA Act will set conditions for aid to create opportunity for people to thrive in their home countries rather than being forced to migrate due to crime, violence and corruption.