



A Union of Professionals



---

# The Educator Workforce and the Dream Act

---

January 2018

*DACA made me visible. DACA made it possible for me to teach children who are deaf and hard of hearing. I am helping these students and families on their journey to being able to communicate and achieve their dreams. For the past four years, I have been able to pursue my dream in the classroom.*

*—Karen Reyes, DACAmended teacher, Austin (Texas) Independent School District*

ON SEPT. 5, 2017, THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCED its plans to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, and that Oct. 5, 2017, would be the last day that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services would accept any DACA applications. As a result, nearly 800,000 people can no longer renew their DACA and employment authorization, **including more than 20,000 bilingual educators and school support staff**, and thousands more aspiring educators who are currently in training. The protection from deportation and work authorization they currently have under DACA remain valid only until the expiration date on their employment authorization document.

## ■ Our school districts, communities and country can't afford to lose teachers

Losing work authorization and protection from deportation impacts not only DACAmended educators and their students but the school districts and communities where DACAmended educators teach and live. **DACA granted teachers and school support staff the work permit and lawful presence necessary to access educational opportunities and seek employment.**

At a time when school districts across the country are facing teacher shortages, exacerbated by teacher turnover, retirements and a decline in enrollment in teacher preparation programs, **we cannot afford to lose the DACAmended educator workforce.** The U.S. Department of Education projects that K-12 enrollment of minority students will continue to grow over the next two decades, and it's no secret that the teaching workforce has not kept pace with the changing demographics of students.

The more than 20,000 educators and school support staff who are DACAmended are an **invaluable resource to their school districts.** Teachers have the great responsibility of educating the next generation of engineers, lawyers, artists, community leaders and fellow educators. Teachers inspire their students with a lifelong love of learning, while helping them develop the skills necessary to compete in a global market.

## ■ Teachers with DACA are in a unique position to make a difference

As the nation's demographics have changed, so has the commitment of organizations such as the American Federation of Teachers, the National Immigration Law Center and other partners working to diversify the teaching workforce and support DACAmented educators in various states, including California, Nevada, New York and Texas. **Teachers with DACA are invaluable in bringing unique perspectives to their classrooms.** They are role models, inspiring students to overcome their own struggles.

Their life experiences help them **empathize with and understand the experiences of their diverse student populations**, which often include immigrants, refugees and English language learners. In many cases, they've had personal experience dealing with the socio-economic hurdles some of their students are working to overcome. Many teachers with DACA have been inspired or helped by an educator along the way, which is one reason they've decided to become educators—to give back.

## ■ Passing the Dream Act would both keep teachers in their classrooms and encourage highly motivated young people to teach

**The Dream Act would help ensure that teachers and school support staff are not pulled out of their classrooms and schools** because they no longer have authorization to be employed in the United States or, worse, because they're about to be deported. It would also allow aspiring educators currently in school or training to continue realizing their dreams.

**The Dream Act would do the following** for those who meet its eligibility criteria:

- **Grant work authorization.** In order to be hired, teachers and school support staff need to be authorized to work in the United States.
- **Allow professionals who were educated and trained in the United States to remain in the country.**
- **Allow our children to receive a high-quality education** from highly competent—and, in many cases, multilingual, multicultural and culturally sensitive—U.S.-trained teachers and school support staff.

The Dream Act would help more than 20,000 teachers and school support staff, and thousands more who aspire to enter the teaching profession, to achieve their academic and professional goals.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**, visit the American Federation of Teachers' immigration webpage at [www.aft.org/immigration](http://www.aft.org/immigration).

**Partners dedicated to supporting teachers with DACA and diversifying the educator workforce:**

