

November 29, 2021

Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20016

Re: Comments on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
86 Fed. Reg. 53,736 (Sep. 28, 2021), DHS Docket No. USCIS-2021-0006

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

On behalf of TESOL International Association, we are writing to express our strong support for the Department's proposed rule to preserve the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

TESOL International Association is the global authority for knowledge and expertise in teaching English, representing the common interests and shared values of more than 12,000 members worldwide. Our association and its members have a long history of advocating for the rights of DACA recipients, many of whom have been English language learners (ELLs), both inside and outside the classroom. Our members provide instruction, guidance, advocacy, and emotional support to undocumented students facing uncertainty regarding citizenship status, school enrollment, and employment eligibility. Following the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas declaring DACA "illegal" in July of this year, that uncertainty has increased among educators and students alike.

Following its inception in 2012, DACA has provided work authorization and protection from deportation to 832,881¹ undocumented young adults who were brought to the United States as children. DACA recipients, or "Dreamers," have called the United States home for most of their lives. As a nation of immigrants, the United States has grown and prospered through the measurable and immeasurable economic, linguistic, and cultural contributions of all immigrants, and continues to do so today. TESOL supports offering protections for undocumented students who were brought into the country as minors and offering orderly and fair pathways to legal residency and citizenship for all immigrants. While we strongly support the Department's action

¹ See *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA): An Overview*, American Immigration Council (Sep. 30, 2021), [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals \(DACA\): An Overview | American Immigration Council](#).

to preserve DACA, we are concerned that without Congressional intervention, DACA recipients will continue to live in uncertainty, in two-year increments.

While the proposed rule is a welcome and necessary stopgap measure to ensure the continuation of DACA, we urge the Department and the Biden Administration to call for swift Congressional action. In order to achieve a permanent solution for DACA recipients, Congress must find a legislative solution to protect the rights of Dreamers and provide undocumented students a pathway to citizenship. TESOL and its members have expressed great support for the DREAM Act over many years and multiple administrations. We strongly encourage the passage of fair and reasonable immigration policy that gives equal opportunities to ELLs.

In the years since 2012, TESOL members have provided instruction to countless students who depend on DACA protections. The vast majority of these young people are either enrolled in school or have completed their education to become skilled workers, fulfilling critical roles in the communities where they have put down roots. Young people who received temporary relief from deportation and employment eligibility through DACA have become indispensable contributors to the economy, are veterans of the military, academic standouts in universities, and leaders in their communities. In 2017 alone, DACA-eligible individuals contributed over \$2.2 billion in federal taxes, helping to support their communities by sustaining critical programs such as Medicare and Social Security.²

TESOL International Association respects and cherishes the innumerable contributions of Dreamers and we applaud the Department for taking action to preserve DACA. We will continue to advocate for a legislative solution to provide Dreamers a pathway to citizenship and the stability they deserve.

Sincerely,



Rosa Aronson
Interim Executive Director
TESOL International Association

² *Overcoming the Odds: The Contributions of DACA-Eligible Immigrants and TPS Holders to the U.S. Economy*, New American Economy Research Fund (June 3, 2019), <https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/report/overcoming-the-odds-the-contributions-of-daca-eligible-immigrants-and-tps-holders-to-the-u-s-economy/>.