FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
5 September 2017

World Relief Urges Congress to Pass Legislative Solution for Dreamers In Light of Termination of DACA

BALTIMORE, MD – Today, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the termination of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program which since 2012 has allowed approximately 800,000 young people who came to the United States as children to obtain employment authorization and a reprieve from the threat of deportation.

Last week, World Relief urged President Trump to refrain from rescinding the DACA program, at least until such time as Congress has passed a legislative solution addressing the plight of these individuals. We have further renewed our call upon Congress to expeditiously pass a bill such as the DREAM Act or the BRIDGE Act, both of which have been introduced with bipartisan cosponsors in the current Congress.

According to the Department of Justice announcement today, the administration will not consider new applications for DACA dated after Sept. 5. Those with DACA due to expire between today and March 5, 2018 can apply for a two-year renewal by October 5. For others, DACA could end as early as March 6, 2018.

“The termination of DACA places more urgency on Congress to pass a legislative solution for Dreamers,” said Scott Arbeiter, President of World Relief. “We are deeply concerned for individuals whose status will expire in March and in subsequent months, and we believe it’s incumbent upon our Congressional leaders to act as soon as possible.”

“These Dreamers have willingly worked with the government in good faith in order to pursue their dreams living in the United States, the only home many of them have ever known,” continued Tim Breene, CEO of World Relief. “The decision to end DACA puts them in a more precarious situation, but we hope Congress will prioritize a legislative solution that will allow these Dreamers to flourish in our country.”

“We will receive any and all applications in order to support DACA recipients as much as possible,” said Courtney Tudi, immigrant legal services director for World Relief, who supports local World Relief offices and a network of local churches in providing authorized, affordable immigration legal services. “We will also continue to support any churches and local ministries as they serve immigrants in their local communities.”

Evangelical leaders, many of whom have individuals with DACA within their congregations, have also spoken up in recent days, urging Congress to act, including Bill and Lynne Hybels of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, IL, Erwin McManus of Mosaic Church in Los Angeles, CA, Dave Gibbons, Founder, Newsong Church in Santa Ana, CA, Felix Cabrera of Iglesia Bautista Central in Oklahoma City, OK, Thabiti Anyabwile of Anacostia River Church in Washington, DC, and Eugene Cho of Quest Church in Seattle, WA. Their full statements can be found [here](https://www.worldrelief.org).

World Relief also joined a [letter](https://www.worldrelief.org) with leaders from the National Association of Evangelicals, the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, the Wesleyan Church, and Korean Churches for Community Development—all of which collectively form the leadership of the Evangelical Immigration Table—in sending letters to President Trump and Congressional leaders urging them to protect those with DACA status and to work together toward a legislative solution. These national leaders are echoing the sentiment of hundreds of local evangelical leaders on the ground. An open [sign-on letter](https://www.worldrelief.org) created by the Evangelical Immigration Table, of which World Relief is a member, gathered nearly 1,000 signers in a few days from pastors and church leaders in 45 states supporting Dreamers.

These pleas from local and national leaders echo the views of most evangelical Christians ‘in the pews.’ Polling by the Public Religion Research Institute finds that a majority of both white evangelical Protestants and non-white Protestants support granting permanent legal status to undocumented immigrants who arrived in the U.S. as children if they attend college or serve in the military, the basic premise of the DREAM Act.
World Relief is a global humanitarian relief and development organization that stands with the vulnerable and partners with local churches to end the cycle of suffering, transform lives and build sustainable communities. With over 70 years of experience, World Relief works in 20 countries worldwide through disaster response, health and child development, economic development and peacebuilding and has offices in the United States that specialize in refugee and immigration services.

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