

Opinion: Eliminating DACA would be wrong

By Minerva G. Carcanó

For a nation that prides itself on its care for children, efforts to eliminate the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program seem contradictory to this value and mean-spirited. Eliminating DACA would be a punishing of the innocent and a crippling of our future.

Nearly 800,000 young people have benefited from DACA. Under DACA these young people have been able to come out of the shadows receiving short-term but important legal status, and work authorization. DACA recipients, however, have received no free benefit. They have had to pay legal and processing fees to become recipients of DACA. They have had to keep their DACA up to date by paying additional fees, attending school at their own cost and working. For the opportunity to stay in the country they were brought to without any say on their part, DACA recipients have had to work hard. They have received nothing for free. These same DACA recipients do, however, bring great benefits to the U.S.



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It is estimated that DACA recipients represent 695,000 of the nation's workforce. According to a recent study, "A New Threat to DACA Could Cost States Billions of Dollars" by Nicole

Prchal Svajlenka and others, removing DACA recipients from the U.S. workforce would result in a loss of \$460.3 billion from the national GDP over the next decade. DACA recipients have benefited the economy of the entire country. The loss of their labor would conversely have a negative impact on our national economy. From a practical economic perspective, eliminating DACA seems very short-sighted.

I have met these DACA recipients. They are bright, committed young people like other young people. They aspire to be doctors, nurses, lawyers, scientists, astronauts, teachers and preachers. They were the ones who through their political will and committed efforts obtained DACA. No one did it for them though many supported them then and support them today, including myself. They are determined to grow and learn, care for their families, contribute to their communities, and make a difference in the world. I believe they will do great things that will benefit all of us if we will continue to support them.

As a Christian, I believe that the welfare of immigrants, and particularly immigrant children and young people, stands above broken immigration policies and certainly above partisan politics. Jesus himself time and again demonstrates through his actions the importance of children, healing them, welcoming them into his presence and declaring that God's kingdom belongs to the children.

On the contrary, those advocating for doing away with DACA demonstrate the kind of hate politics that would not only hurt immigrant children and young people, but would also contribute to the shaping of a culture of prejudice and discrimination that would hurt all children and undermine the culture of our country, a culture of respect and acceptance of the other.

Let's teach the children of this country the values of respect, and acceptance, and the belief that all children are of equal worth. Maintaining DACA and strengthening it can contribute to this lesson.

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