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Statement of Illinois Catholic Bishops Concerning Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

For more than two hundred years people from almost every country of the world have dreamed of making the United States their home. Their dreams are the reason most of us are immigrants or the descendants of immigrants. Today, a new generation of dreamers urgently needs our help to contribute their gifts to our country.

Even though we have the right to manage immigration for the sake of the common good, we can never become callous to the yearning of others to become citizens of this great country. Indeed, the continuous flow of immigrants is, in large measure, the reason our nation is great.

One particular group of immigrants today languishes in a cruel legal limbo. They are the hundreds of thousands of young people who were brought to this country when they were still children. Today these young adults are fully integrated into our society and culture, holding jobs and starting their own families. This is the only country they truly know. This is their home!

When Congress failed to pass comprehensive immigration reform, President Barack Obama signed an executive order, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, known as DACA. This order allowed these young people, who came to be known as “Dreamers,” to remain in the country for a period of time but offered no path to permanent legal status. Citing constitutional concerns, President Trump has revoked the executive order and called upon Congress to resolve the matter legislatively.

We call on the members of the Illinois congressional delegation to enact comprehensive immigration reform. We ask you to provide the young people among us, who truly have no other home, with secure legal status. As Pope Francis has said, it is time to stop treating our immigrants as “pawns on the chessboard of humanity.” It is urgent that you put an end to “deferred action” and provide a permanent solution.

We offer our compassion and support to the Dreamers. We are aware of your situation and we will work to assure your immigration status is regularized. You have brought many wonderful assets to this country and our Church, and we are proud to have you among us.

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