

TO: CoTESOL Membership

FROM: Kat Bradley-Bennett and Elizabeth Schroeder, Socio-Political Liaisons

SUBJECT: The President, DACA, and the BRIDGE Act

Sept. 5, 2017

By now, you have probably heard that President Trump is expected to end the Obama Executive Action known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA. DACA protects immigrant children who were brought to the United States without documents. It provides *temporary* protection from deportation while they finish school, pursue higher education, and delve into a career.

Ending DACA will impact an estimated 800,000 young immigrants who have lived here most or all of their childhood – more than 17,000 of them live in Colorado. Many of these so-called “dreamers” know no other culture than the United States. They consider themselves to be Americans and strive to graduate from high-school, attend college, build a career, and contribute to their communities.

Donald Trump promised to end DACA as a campaign promise and it’s looking more and more likely that he will fulfill this promise today. He is under pressure from his base and the fact that 10 state attorneys general and governors have threatened to sue the federal government if it does not end DACA. (DAPA, the temporary protection for parents was already rescinded some months ago.) Many states stand with the dreamers, however, and you’ll find a link to a petition below that calls for Colorado State Attorney General to stand with these states in defense of the dreamers and in opposition to the threatened lawsuit.

It is important to remember that DACA is *not* amnesty! It provides temporary protection and not every immigrant brought here as a child qualifies for it. Under DACA, young people can continue their education and work. President Obama enacted it as an Executive Action in the hope that Congress would eventually pass comprehensive immigration reform. Sadly, Congress has merely “kicked the can down the road,” which allows the dreamers to be left in Limbo now.

There is hope on the horizon, however, and every ESL teacher in Colorado can add his/her voice to the cause! This summer, Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Dick Durbin (D-IL), along with five other senators introduced the Bar Removal of Individuals Who Dream and Grow Our Economy Act, or the BRIDGE Act. BRIDGE has bi-partisan and bi-cameral support in Congress – its sister bill in the House of Representatives is sponsored by Mike Coffman (R-CO) and seven other members of the House

BRIDGE is not a final solution, but it buys a few years for Congress to pull together comprehensive immigration reform. BRIDGE provides provisional protection for hundreds of

thousands of young people who want nothing more than a chance to prove themselves as citizens and contribute to the American economy without fear of deportation.

Your Representative and both Senators need to hear from you this week on BRIDGE. Mike Coffman will try to bring it to a floor vote in the House this week. We have provided contact information for all of Colorado below.

If you want to add a deeper level of advocacy for these young people, you can contact the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition (CIRC) at <http://coloradoimmigrant.org/>. They will be organizing school walkouts if the President rescinds DACA.

There is a CIRC-sponsored [petition](#) calling for Colorado State Attorney General Cynthia Coffman to join with other states and challenge the threatened lawsuit.

You can find valuable information and resources from TESOL, as well as read their many position papers in support of ELLs everywhere at: <http://www.tesol.org/advance-the-field/advocacy-resources>

“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.” (Helen Keller)

Name		Website	Office	Phone
Sen. Cory Gardner	R	https://www.gardner.senate.gov/	354 Russell Senate Office Building	(202) 224-5941
Sen. Michael Bennet	D	https://www.bennet.senate.gov/	261 Russell Senate Office Building	202-224-5852
Rep. Ken Buck	R-4	https://buck.house.gov/	416 Cannon House Office Building	(202) 225-4676
Rep. Scott Tipton	R-3	http://tipton.house.gov/	218 Cannon House Office Building	(202) 225-4761
Rep. Mike Coffman	R-6	http://coffman.house.gov/	2443 Rayburn House Office Building	202.225.7882
Rep. Doug Lamborn	R-5	http://lamborn.house.gov/	2402 Rayburn House Office Building	(202) 225-4422
Rep. Diana DeGette	D-1	http://degette.house.gov/	2368 Rayburn House Office Building	(202) 225-4431
Rep. Ed	D-7	http://perlmutter.house.gov/	1410 Longworth	303.274.7944

Perlmutter			House Office Building	
Rep. Jared Polis	D-2	http://polis.house.gov/	1433 Longworth House Office Building	(202) 225-2161