

November 19, 2021

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL SUPPORTS EFFORT TO PRESERVE AND FORTIFY DACA

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul, as part of a coalition of 24 attorneys general, today supported the federal government's efforts to preserve and fortify the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. In a comment letter, Raoul and the coalition highlight the critical contributions hundreds of thousands of Dreamers make to the economy, broader public health efforts, and communities across the country. Raoul and the attorneys general are urging the federal government to finalize regulations codifying DACA to ensure that states can continue to benefit from the program.

Since 2012, DACA has protected from deportation and extended work authorization to approximately 825,000 individuals who grew up in this country, most of whom have known no home other than the United States.

"Dreamers make invaluable contributions to our schools, workplaces, and communities every day," Raoul said. "DACA reflects the belief that young people brought to this country for a better life deserve the chance to get ahead. I urge the federal government to codify DACA so it can continue to protect thousands of young people and their rights to live and work in the only country they have ever known as home."

The DACA program has allowed recipients to live, study, and work across the United States free from the fear of being forcibly separated from their families and communities. DACA has enabled hundreds of thousands of grantees to enroll in colleges and universities, complete their educations, start businesses that help improve our economy, and give back to our communities as teachers, medical professionals, engineers, and entrepreneurs. These contributions have been especially evident as the COVID-19 pandemic began to sweep through the nation when thousands of DACA recipients were on the frontlines as essential workers. As of April 2020, an estimated 27,000 health care workers and support staff depend on DACA for their authorization to work in the United States, which includes nurses, dentists, pharmacists, physician assistants, home health aides, technicians, and others. DACA has also advanced public health and societal interests in another way: by giving recipients the opportunity to procure employer-provided health insurance, which has been particularly critical as the states fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the [comment letter](#), Raoul and the coalition urge federal government to preserve and fortify the protections of DACA and assert that:

- DACA has public safety and public health benefits for the states.
- The states benefit economically from DACA and DACA recipients.
- DACA and DACA recipients are important to the states' higher education institutions.
- The states have adopted laws, regulations, and programs in reliance on DACA.
- Opponents of DACA are unable to substantiate any alleged harms.

Joining Raoul in the comment are the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.