



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TEXAS LEADERS UNITE TO URGE PASSAGE OF A PERMANENT LEGISLATIVE SOLUTION FOR DACA RECIPIENTS

Texas Opportunity Coalition will work to build bipartisan support for effort among Texas congressional delegation

AUSTIN, TX - Today, the Texas Business Immigration Coalition (a member of the American Business Immigration Coalition) and the Texas Business Leadership Council, along with more than thirty Texas leaders in business and higher education launched the Texas Opportunity Coalition, a new initiative that promotes and supports targeted immigration reform. The Texas Opportunity Coalition is dedicated to securing passage of a federal Dream Act, which would provide young undocumented immigrants (Dreamers) in Texas and across the country the right to work, pursue higher education, contribute to their local economies, and obtain permanent legal status.

U.S Senator John Cornyn (R-Texas), who has pushed for a permanent legislative solution for DACA recipients, stated the following in a recorded message during the event:

“Despite all the ways DACA recipients strengthen our country and our communities, they’re living in a constant state of uncertainty about their futures. We must take action that will give these young men and women the certainty they deserve, and the only way to do that is through legislation. We need to learn from the lessons of the past, and begin working on smaller packages that can gain broad support, and hopefully build trust in the process. I think this approach provides an opening to build good will and finally take action on DACA, which is something folks on both sides of the aisle support.”

In Texas alone, Dreamers contribute more than \$400 million in state and local taxes on top of the \$440 million they pay in federal taxes. Their purchasing power injects close to \$2.9 billion annually into the state’s economy. The Texas Opportunity Coalition is calling for Congress to enact laws that recognize Dreamers’ economic contributions, and provide them an opportunity to legally work, start businesses, and continue paying taxes in Texas.

“Texas is in a unique position to lead the country in economic growth, especially with the passage of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement,” said **Eddie Aldrete, Senior Vice President of IBC Bank**. “A vital piece to ensuring our successful transition into a 21st Century economy is by protecting Texas Dreamers. Our businesses are able to grow and thrive when they have access to the human capital they need. By filling high-skilled jobs, serving in our military, and starting businesses, these Dreamers have proven that they are an integral part of our state’s economy. Not only is providing these hard-working individuals with a permanent legal status the right thing to do, it is also in the state’s and the nation’s best economic interest to allow these dedicated workers, entrepreneurs, and neighbors to continue to work, live, and create jobs in Texas.”

“We hope that by launching and building this coalition, we can speed the passage of bipartisan federal legislation that will create permanent legal status for our Dreamers, and allow Texas’s economy to rebuild after the devastating impact of COVID-19,” said **Justin Yancy, president of the Texas Business Leadership Council**. “A federal Dream Act will help ensure that Texas leads in job creation and economic growth in the post-pandemic recovery. Texas Dreamers fill critical workforce needs in fields such as healthcare, high-tech, manufacturing, hospitality, and construction, and many served as frontline workers during this pandemic.”

Texas leaders representing businesses, chambers of commerce, and higher education institutions across the state have signed on to support the Coalition's efforts, including:

- Austin Chamber of Commerce
- Center for the United States and Mexico - Baker Institute at Rice University
- El Paso Chamber of Commerce
- El Paso Community College
- El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce
- Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Grayson College
- Greater Arlington Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Dallas Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce
- HMS
- IBC Bank
- Irving Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- North Texas Commission
- San Antonio Chamber of Commerce
- SWBC
- Tarleton State University
- Texans for Economic Growth
- Texas Association of Business
- Texas Association of Manufacturers
- Texas Business Immigration Coalition
- Texas Business Leadership Council
- Texas Lutheran University
- Texas Restaurant Association
- Texas State University
- Texas Woman's University
- The Borderplex Alliance
- United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce
- University of North Texas
- University of North Texas at Dallas
- University of Texas at Dallas
- University of Texas at San Antonio
- University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
- University of the Incarnate Word

Over the next 100 days, members of the Texas Opportunity Coalition will meet with Texas congressional representatives on both sides of the aisle to make the economic case for a federal Dream Act and build broad-based and bipartisan support for federal legislation that protects Dreamers. As the state with the second largest number of Dreamers, Texas will be disproportionately affected by any Dream Act negotiations.

“I am an immigrant and DACA Recipient. Since moving to the U.S more than twenty years ago, I have graduated high school in Texas, obtained a degree from Yale University, and returned to the state to teach elementary school. I continue to give back to my community through my taxes, my investment in our children’s education, and my professional leadership positions,” said **Juan Carlos Cerda, DFW business outreach manager at the Texas Business Immigration Coalition**. “Unfortunately, DACA is only a temporary solution for Dreamers like me, and we need permanent legal solutions that allow us to continue contributing to our local communities.”

“Poll after poll shows that Texans, like all Americans, overwhelmingly support permanent legal status for Dreamers, but politics continues to get in the way of sensible policies like the Dream Act,” said **Rebecca Shi, Executive Director of the Texas Business Immigration Coalition**. “This effort is about moving past politics and showing members the economic and financial benefits they are leaving on the table every time they decide not to pass a federal Dream Act. Texas is among the states that stand to lose the most, and the Coalition wants to make sure Texas’s business community has a seat at the table and, we hope, the chance to positively influence negotiations.”

“To continue to grow our economy, Texas must retain its existing workforce and talent. With 96% of DACA recipients working or in school, they are some of our state’s highest achieving and most talented assets. They fill critical positions in industries that keep our state competitive, such as manufacturing, construction, technology, and hospitality. Nationwide, more than half a million Dreamers are essential workers. During the pandemic, Texas Dreamers have helped keep our state safe,” said **Woody L. Hunt, Senior Chairman of the Board, Hunt Companies, Inc.**

The Texas Opportunity Coalition’s efforts are structured around five core principles that legislators should recognize and that should inform any legislative effort to enact comprehensive immigration reform. These principles can be viewed at <http://txopportunity.org/policy>.

To learn more about the Texas Opportunity Coalition, please visit <https://www.txopportunity.org/>.