

Education Alert

Legislation of Vital Concern to Miami-Dade County's Students

DATE: December 18, 2017
TO: Members of the Miami-Dade Congressional Delegation
FROM: Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT: **TIMELY LEGISLATION REQUIRED FOR BOTH DACA AND TPS PROGRAMS**



On two immigration issues critical to South Florida, the Trump Administration has shifted the burden to Congress to come up with permanent legislative solutions—with deadlines that could severely impact local students, families, and communities. We strongly urge **timely, fair, and bipartisan legislation to extend legal residency for deserving individuals, replacing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and expiring Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designations.**

BACKGROUND: Both DACA and TPS are temporary humanitarian policies that allow childhood arrivals or persons from countries in crisis to attend American schools and serve as U.S. workers, military members, homeowners, and parents. The Trump Administration has announced changes to executive policy that will end protection against deportation for registered individuals:

- In September, the Administration announced a six-month deadline to end DACA protection (March 2018) for those who arrived in the U.S. as children and continue to be productive, law-abiding students, workers, or military service members.
- In November, the Administration announced deadlines to end TPS designation for Nicaragua (Jan. 2019) and Haiti (July 2019), with actions on El Salvador and Honduras pending. TPS provides legal status for persons in the U.S. from countries affected by crisis conditions.

The DACA action creates a window through March 2018 to enact a legislative solution that replaces this stopgap administrative policy, such as the bipartisan **DREAM Act of 2017** (S. 1615/H.R. 3440). Congressional representatives from both parties have urged that a DACA fix be achieved in December since an end-of-year budget bill requires bipartisan action to pass, and bipartisan talks in both the House and Senate would address the legal status of Dreamers along with other immigration issues. However, to minimize high-stakes partisanship on immigration issues, Congressional leaders in both parties have announced that they will not link DACA resolution to a possible government shutdown.

Similarly, legislative action such as the **ESPERER Act of 2017** (H.R. 4184) is needed before the expiration of TPS, just as Congress acted in the 1990s, to provide long-term TPS holders a pathway to lawful permanent residency. TPS holders from neighboring Central America and Haiti have proven to be lawful and productive members of U.S. communities, as documented by 2017 reports from the Center for Migration Studies and University of Kansas. The World Bank estimates that the annual remittances they send to families abroad make up 18 to 31 percent of GDP in Haiti, El Salvador, and Honduras. U.S. schools have educated approximately 68,000 TPS holders who arrived as youth prior to 2012, as well as 273,000 children of TPS holders whose parents could be forced to choose between losing their legal status or moving U.S.-born, English-speaking children to a new country.

ACTION REQUIRED: Both DACA and TPS recipients have strong ties and economic impacts in South Florida, as well as other U.S. communities. We urge Congress to **create a path to residency for both DACA-eligible youth and lawful TPS registrants—and their U.S.-born schoolchildren—so they can remain taxpaying, law-abiding members of our local communities.** For further information, please contact Ms. Iraida R. Mendez-Cartaya, Associate Superintendent, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Grants Administration, and Community Engagement, at 305-995-2532.

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