

Contact: Patrick Brannigan
609.989.1120 x 12

A Statement in Support of the Dream Act of 2017 by the Catholic Bishops of New Jersey

We, the Catholic Bishops of New Jersey, are pastors to over four million men, women and children who trace their roots to almost every country of the world and represent every race and ethnicity.

That is one of the reasons we ask the New Jersey Congressional delegation to support the *Dream Act of 2017* (S.1615/H.R. 3440). The *Dream Act of 2017* would protect almost 800,000 *DACA* youth (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) who entered the United States as children and know America as their only home. These youth call themselves *Dreamers* because they seek the American dream of liberty.

Tens of thousands of *Dreamers* call New Jersey home. They serve in our military. They are honor students in our colleges and universities. They are leaders in our parishes. They enrich the economic vitality and stability of our communities. Unfortunately, throughout the nation, many *Dreamers* live with anxiety and fear that at any time they might be separated from their families and deported to a country they do not know.

As Bishops, we encourage all people of good will to love their neighbors and to welcome strangers. We write to you, our Representatives in Congress, urging you to support and to co-sponsor the *Dream Act of 2017*. In addition, we ask you to support in Congress a comprehensive immigration reform that includes establishing a path towards citizenship.

While we support securing our nation's borders from those who would harm us, such actions and policies ought not to prevent us from protecting our *Dreamers*. Jesus taught that we will be judged on the basis of how we treat the most vulnerable members of society (Matthew 25: 31-46). Today, our *Dreamers* are among the most vulnerable in our society.

We urge our New Jersey Congressional delegation to stand on the right side of judgement by supporting the *Dream Act of 2017*.

As for us, we stand in solidarity with our *Dreamers* and we are ready to assist Congress, our state and our communities in the development and implementation of comprehensive immigration reform.

Cardinal Joseph A. Tobin, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop, Archdiocese of Newark

Most Reverend Kurt Burnette
Bishop, Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

Most Reverend David M. O'Connell, C.M.
Bishop, Diocese of Trenton

Most Reverend Yousif B. Habash
Bishop, Our Lady of Deliverance Syriac Catholic Diocese

Most Reverend Dennis J. Sullivan
Bishop, Diocese of Camden

Most Reverend John W. Flesey
Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Newark

Most Reverend Arthur J. Serratelli
Bishop, Diocese of Paterson

Most Reverend Manuel A. Cruz, D.D.,
Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Newark

Most Reverend James F. Checchio
Bishop, Diocese of Metuchen

September 5, 2017