



Pax Christi South Dakota

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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**SOUTH DAKOTA FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS
URGE CONGRESS TO PASS THE DREAM ACT**

SIoux FALLS, SD- Faith-based organizations in South Dakota unite their voices with *Pax Christi South Dakota* to support the Dream Act of 2017 (H.R. 3440/S. 1615), urging members of Congress to pass the Dream Act, as soon as possible. We are deeply concerned for the nearly 800,000 youth who are DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipients, whose lives and dreams are being held hostage since the President's decision on September 5th to end that program. As people of faith, we believe that our government has the moral mandate to pursue policies of welcome and inclusion.

South Dakota is home to about 630 DACA recipients. Each of these 630 has a face and a story. Pax Christi South Dakota Director, Grode-Wolters reminds us, "Our faith guides us to believe in the dignity of all persons, especially the most vulnerable. It is not right that these young people should have to live in constant fear; rather it would be in the nation's best interest to foster their God-given potential." They are contributors to their families, businesses, communities and the future of our economy.

One person who we will call Maria, is a registered nurse in a local hospital. She has a family and fears deportation if DACA is not renewed. *DACA keeps families together!* Jose, fluent in Spanish and English, is employed with a bank and is a valued loan officer to their Hispanic clients. Sioux Falls is the only home he knows. *DACA eases shortages in the workforce!*

Without the DREAM ACT, our economy will be seriously impacted. In South Dakota alone, program recipients contribute millions of dollars to the economy each year. The President's decision and Congress' inability to pass the Dream Act, would cost South Dakota \$12.2 million a year, according to the *Center for American Progress*.

We, the undersigned, urge our South Dakota legislators, Senators Michael Rounds and John Thune and Representative Kristi Noem, to **pass** the Dream Act of 2017 which would provide these hard-working, law-abiding young people a path to permanent residence and citizenship. We urge Congress to separate discussions about the Dream Act from any other budget or tax discussions. The discussion to secure borders is quite different from a discussion to secure the lives and dreams of our future generation of leaders. Dreamers are not pawns on the chessboard of politics!

W.B. Yeats' poem, "He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven," captures the DREAMers' experience:

*"But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams."*

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SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS:

Benedictine Multicultural Center, Watertown, SD

Caminando Juntos, Sioux Falls, SD

Mother of God Monastery, Watertown SD Benedictine Sisters

Multi-Cultural Center of Sioux Falls, SD

PBVM Justice Commission – Aberdeen, SD

Reverend Kristopher Cowles, Diocese of Sioux Falls, SD

Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Aberdeen, SD