

What Should Christians Think About DACA?

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was established in June, 2012 by the Obama administration. DACA granted an automatically renewing two-year work visa for certain illegal immigrants, essentially providing them “permanent” residency status. These immigrants are called “Dreamers” in part because they entered the U.S. before the age of 16 and were younger than 31 in June 2012. DACA circumvented Congress and the law, establishing something Congress had previously refused to do. President Trump’s administration rescinded this program on Sept. 5, 2017, with a six-month phasing-out period.

The 800,000 “Dreamers,” brought to America as children, or born here, are illegal aliens because of someone else’s decision. Christians should feel compassion for them. But DACA is unconstitutional. The legislative branch (Congress) establishes laws, the executive branch (the president and his administration) executes and enforces the law. Even President Obama stated that the president does not have the authority to change immigration law: “(I) can’t just bypass Congress and change (immigration) law myself ... That’s not how democracy works.” Christians should support upholding our laws, not circumventing them. (Download a free resource: “Pray to Uphold the Constitution.”)

So, how can Christians pray about this?

1. **Pray for law and order:** “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are appointed by God” (Rom. 13:1). We need to pray for our current administration to clearly establish and protect the laws of the United States. And we need to pray that the

president and Congress will work together to enforce and improve immigration laws.

2. **Pray for a proper understanding of borders:** “He has made from one blood every nation of men to live on the entire face of the earth, having appointed fixed times and the boundaries of their habitation” (Acts 17:26). God establishes nations and borders. It is up to our leaders to negotiate where those borders are and how, when, and where a person may legally enter. Open borders with little or no entry laws are not borders at all.
3. **Pray that our immigration laws will demonstrate justice and mercy:** “Therefore, the Lord longs to be gracious to you, and therefore, He waits on high to have mercy on you; for the Lord is a God of justice; how blessed are all who long for Him” (Isa. 30:18). True godliness marries justice and mercy, which is difficult to do in this case. Some of the “Dreamers” were just infants when brought to the U.S.; some were born here. Justice may indicate that, regardless of the circumstances, someone entering the country illegally has broken the law. And yet, should we punish innocent children for their parents’ actions? Shouldn’t we extend mercy to them? President Trump expressed this sentiment in a tweet on Sept. 14, 2017: “Does anybody really want to throw out good, educated and accomplished young people who have jobs, some serving in the military? Really! ...”

This is a difficult dilemma—our government must figure out what to do about immigration and the “Dreamers.” But Christians know what to do when something is difficult. Let’s pray for effective laws, for the borders God has determined for this nation and that our immigration policies will balance justice and mercy. {eoa}

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