

George O. Wood, Greg Laurie Among Those Strongly Admonishing Against Trump Administration's Immigration Decisions

Evangelical leaders from across America released a statement calling for the Trump administration to reconsider how it will move forward with the DACA program.

"Biblically understood, a just system of law always has in view human flourishing. We advocate for change to particular laws when needed because of our respect for the rule of law. Many of us have participated in our nation's debate over immigration policy reform for well over a decade, and these conversations within our churches about the national immigration crisis have produced significant consensus among members of our churches and communities," the statement reads.

"We now call on Congress for a timely solution on a narrow issue of national consensus: Provide a legal remedy for the subset of undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children by their parents, those immigrants commonly called Dreamers," the statement continues.

President Donald Trump recently announced plans to replace the DACA program, sparking controversy about the program and the recipients across the nation.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, the phase-out of the 5-year-old Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program designed by the Obama administration comes as Congress struggles to write legislation that would put alternative protections into law, as President Trump requested.

But for evangelical leaders like Russell Moore, Greg Laurie, George O. Wood, Jack Graham, Matt Chandler and more, children's immigration status is a moral issue, not just a political one.

The Evangelical Leader Statement of Principles on Dreamers focuses on the following principles:

***We believe it is unjust to punish children for offenses they did not commit.** We recognize that Dreamers are a special category of immigrants because they broke no law and committed no offense. How we treat this category of immigrants is therefore not just a policy or political issue—it is a moral issue. Subjecting Dreamers to deportation or lives of perpetual insecurity in the shadows of our communities is an offense to the rule of law and to the purpose of government, which is for the good of people.*

***We believe America's borders must be secure.** The federal government bears a God-given responsibility to ensure the security of our nation. We hold a variety of opinions on how best to achieve satisfactory border security, but we all agree that border security is a necessary ingredient to reforming our immigration system.*

***We believe we should welcome Dreamers of good moral character and who are working hard to contribute to our country.** Young immigrants who participated in the DACA program have demonstrated they are good neighbors who contribute positively to our country. They have proven this by pursuing education, working and paying taxes, sacrificially serving in our military and rejecting lives of crime. We also believe that governments have a fundamental responsibility to protect their citizens. A solution for Dreamers rightly excludes those convicted of felonies or multiple misdemeanors.*

***We believe Dreamers deserve to be recognized as our fellow Americans.** Foundational American ideas like freedom, self-*

government and equality are worthy of our allegiance as Christians when they harmonize with biblical truths about the dignity of every human being. We are a nation founded on ideas, not ethnicity; being American is about pledging allegiance to our nation's ideals. We should include Dreamers, who already have shown themselves willing to play by the rules, in that opportunity to become Americans.

We believe our government should provide a pathway to permanent legal status and/or citizenship for eligible Dreamers. The fact that so many immigrants are in a state of limbo is evidence both political parties have failed for decades to develop and implement sound immigration policy. A proper and just solution will bring our neighbors out of the shadows of civic life, cultivate the stability of families and provide the opportunity to work legally. Such provisions not only serve the interests of Dreamers, but are foundational for the flourishing of our communities.

We believe a just government works to maintain the integrity of families. God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society and that children are a blessing from the Lord. Broken families, wherever they are found, put women and children at risk and increase likelihood of poverty and crime—as well as the likelihood of dependence on government programs. Policymakers must therefore prioritize and uphold the role of the family when addressing immigration policy.

The time for doing nothing is long expired. Both political parties are guilty of failing to enforce immigration policy and perpetuating the status quo to the detriment of both U.S. citizens and undocumented immigrants. It is now incumbent on members of both parties to set politics aside for the sake of our nation, its families and its communities and pass a legislative solution for Dreamers.

Samuel Rodriguez also signed the statement. The National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference president called for a 60-day campaign to put “unrelenting” pressure on Congress the day they announced their plan to phase DACA out.

“Hundreds of thousands of Hispanic young people will be overcome with fear and grief today. Simultaneously, a multiethnic coalition of tens of millions of law-abiding U.S. citizens will begin to put unrelenting pressure on members of Congress to provide a permanent solution for DREAMers, whose fate is in question by no fault of their own,” Rodriguez says. “For far too long in this country, Hispanic young people have been the political bargaining chips of our powerful politicians. This is an affront to the sanctity of life; it is inhumane; and the Hispanic community will stand for it no longer. Our elected members of Congress have time and again professed concern for the Hispanic community and yet have chosen to do nothing. We will not distinguish between Republicans and Democrats but between those who stand for righteousness and justice and those who do not.”

What do you think? Sound off!