

# Help for Dreamers?

DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) is a program that allows undocumented people who came to the United States as children to receive work permits. The DREAM Act (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act) is a bill in Congress that, if passed, would do the same thing. The DREAM Act is simply a more permanent version of DACA. The people who qualify are referred to as DREAMERS.



About 650,000 undocumented immigrants were enrolled in DACA as of September 30, 2019. While the majority of Dreamers are from Mexico or Central and South America, many were born in Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and Africa. The average Dreamer is 21 to 25 years old, female and not married.

In order to qualify for DACA, the undocumented immigrant must have come to the United States as a child (before their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday), have lived in the US continuously since that time, currently be in school, have graduated from high school or earned a GED, or have been in the Coast Guard or Military and been honorably discharged, and not have been convicted of a felony. Enrollment in the program must be renewed every two years.

## Pros

DACA and the Dream Act benefit both the eligible immigrants and the United States. Firstly, and most importantly, most people who are eligible for the DACA program have grown up and been educated in the United States. Tax dollars have already been invested in these individuals and sending them back to their home country would be a waste of this money.

Furthermore, sending them back to their home country would be sending them to a place they do not actually know. They are well integrated into American society, having grown up in the US, and see themselves as American: they are essentially American, except that they do not have the documents to prove it.



Additionally, these immigrants are vital to American society. In 2020, some 900 DACA recipients served in the US military, 20,000 were school teachers and 27,000 were healthcare workers, including nurses, home health aides and technicians.

Moreover, the fact that they do not have official paperwork to live and work in the United States means that they can easily be taken advantage of by their employers, for example through lower wages or unsafe work conditions. DACA provides a safe alternative allowing people to work without fear of being sent back to their home country, to pay taxes, and to establish economic stability within their community.

Steps toward legalization that have been proposed through this legislation include the payment of a mandatory fine, payment of back taxes that may be owed, citizenship tests and additional background checks. If the 650,000 people currently under DACA each paid a \$2,000 fine to resolve their illegal status and paid their unpaid taxes, several billion dollars in revenue would be generated for the United States as a result.

## Good to know

The term **undocumented** refers to anyone living in a country without the appropriate legal paperwork to allow them to live, go to school and/or work there.

- <sup>1</sup> to defer sth *etw* verschieben
- <sup>4</sup> **act** Gesetz
- <sup>5</sup> alien *Ausländer/in*
- <sup>5</sup> **minor** *Minderjährige/r*
- <sup>5</sup> **bill** *Gesetzentwurf*
- <sup>8</sup> to refer to *bezeichnen*

## Good to know

**GED** stands for General Education Development. It is a test that one can take to get the equivalent of a high school diploma in the United States.

- <sup>20</sup> **eligible** *berechtigt, geeignet*
- <sup>34</sup> **aide** *Hilfskraft*
- <sup>37</sup> **wages** *pl Lohn*
- <sup>42</sup> **mandatory** *verpflichtend, vorgeschrieben, obligatorisch*
- <sup>42</sup> **back taxes** *pl Steuerschulden*

- 48 to encourage sth etw fördern
- 56 to reward belohnen
- 60 to lessen sth etw mindern, etw verringern
- 61 overpopulation Überbevölkerung
- 63 fault Schuld, Verschulden
- 69 to convict sb jdn verurteilen (für schuldig befinden)
- 71 ID card Ausweis
- 72 to commit (a crime) (ein Verbrechen) begehen

### Cons

Without a doubt, the DACA program encourages more illegal immigration. The first and most important point to remember is that when families make the decision to illegally immigrate to the United States, they do so in the hope that their young children will qualify for the DREAM Act and receive work permits. For example, in 1986 three million illegal immigrants were legalized and this encouraged more illegal immigrants to come to the country in the hope that they too would become legal residents. Between 1990 and 2007, the number of unauthorized immigrants in the US rose from 500,000 to 12.2 million per year.

Secondly, law breakers should not be rewarded with legal status. The people covered by DACA may have come to the US as children, but they are still in the US illegally. By providing a possibility for citizenship to people who have broken the law, whether knowingly or not, the value of citizenship for the people who have gone through the process legally is lessened. It is acceptable for a country to enforce its laws, which are meant to discourage overpopulation and the using of resources within a nation. The parents of these children are guilty of knowingly putting their families at risk when entering a country illegally. It is not the fault of the United States that they entered illegally.

Furthermore, more people within a community means more competition for the jobs that exist. Employers can then hire people at lower wages because there are so many people competing for one job.

Lastly, these illegal immigrants are eligible for DACA only if they have not been convicted of a crime. The key word here, however, is convicted. There are many young illegal immigrants who do not pay income tax and often commit work-related crimes such as fraud, lying on tax forms, making fake ID cards, etc. Simply because they have not been convicted of these crimes does not mean that they have not been committed. Therefore, without doubt, there are people who should not be granted legal status because they are criminals and should actually not qualify for the DACA program, which in itself should not exist because allowing these illegal immigrants to stay in the country puts the country's existing citizens at risk.

(860 words)

### Exam preparation

5 ▶ Writing a summary, p. 81

3 Summarize the arguments in favour of and against DACA and the Dream Act.

### Listening

4 You are going to listen to an interview with Pareen Mhatre, a Dreamer. While listening, take notes on the following points. You do not need to write complete sentences.

- 1 Pareen Mhatre's age when she came to the United States
- 2 the kind of visa Pareen's parents had
- 3 the kind of visa Pareen has now
- 4 reason why Pareen realized that her visa put her at a disadvantage
- 5 possible course of action for Pareen when her current visa expires
- 6 main cause of Pareen's clinical depression
- 7 her parents' motivation to move to the USA
- 8 Pareen's course of study
- 9 Pareen's career goal



30

### Exam preparation

5 ▶ Dealing with listening tasks, pp. 123–125

### Good to know

An **H-1B visa** allows US employers to temporarily employ foreign workers in special occupations.

An **H-4 dependent visa** is given to family members of the visa holder.