

# **Commentary: DACA turns 10, more action needed**

June 14, 2022

How long, Lord? How long will we take to fix a wrong? As we approach the June 15 10-year anniversary of the executive order known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, I wonder how much longer will it take?

## **Caught in the debate**

Twenty years ago, there was a vote in congress to protect children of undocumented immigrants. These children came to this country as infants, toddlers and young children. That was the first failure to fix a broken law.

Nowhere in U.S. law or in biblical teaching do we hold a child responsible for decisions made by adults, except in the immigration system.

Debate after debate occurred during the next 10 years. Bills were introduced every legislative session by leaders from both parties, yet our leaders could not find common ground or let compromise find its way to solutions.

The heart of a father with teenaged daughters and public outcries resulted in an executive action. This action was intended to be a stop-gap safety net for thousands of children graduating from high school with no ability to continue advancing their education, drive a car or take a job as their friends were doing.

Often, these children had assumed they were born in the United States and only began to realize the doors were closing at a time in life when so many possibilities set the stage for their future.

# Deja vu

That reality again is facing nearly 100,000 graduating seniors across the country, as cited in a recent article in [The Hill](#), as the short-term executive order no longer provides protection for many.

The executive order required these children reaching 18 years of age or older to complete applications, pay fees and undergo background checks to be granted protection from deportation, eligibility to work, to apply for a driver's license and serve in the U.S. military. This process required renewal every two years.

The decision to apply was difficult for these emerging adults. They often struggled with shame and worry. Would their parents or other family members be at greater risk of deportation during a time of increasing hostilities?

I spent thousands of hours praying with and for these young adults as they navigated the process. I have watched them grow to amazing adults, despite 10 years and of inaction, litigation and hate-filled commentary on the nightly news.

Litigation has halted applications for thousands of young people as they reach that magic age. Litigation for action in early July drives a risk of termination of the protection for nearly all Dreamers, those participating in DACA or who are DACA-eligible.

## God's concern

According to the [American Immigration Council](#), Texas has 204,453 DACA-eligible residents with 95.2 percent in the labor force, contributing \$963.4 million in state, local and federal taxes, and nearly 9,000 entrepreneurs creating jobs and building a stronger economy.

While these numbers tell an impressive story, my concerns are rooted in a commitment to the authority of the Bible, in which God repeatedly affirms his love and concern for vulnerable foreigners and instructs his people to do the same.

God also established the family unit, which compels us to protect family unity wherever possible, and ordains civil authorities to maintain order and seek the common good. The Evangelical Immigration Table has issued a [call to action](#) expressing this objective.

I pray daily God will protect these amazing Americans and their families from the hurt that comes when we group people in small and demeaning ways.

I pray the church will come alongside these families and see them as Christ sees them, understanding he moves people for his good and perfect plan.

I pray we will welcome them with love and joy based on their character, their family values and their love of this country.

I pray our elected officials will come together in bipartisanship, and act and resolve to provide a pathway to citizenship for DACA, DACA-Eligible and Dreamers.

I pray God will restore this nation to one of honor and character—one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for *all*.

Finally, I pray you will join me in these prayers.

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