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World Relief Responds to DACA Ruling, Calls on Congress to Grant a Permanent Pathway to Citizenship for Dreamers

BALTIMORE, September 13, 2023 – Today, Judge Andrew Hanen upheld his previous ruling that DACA was established unlawfully under the Obama administration, but extended the stay on a program that allows current DACA recipients to remain living and working in the US without fear of deportation. However, this decision continues to leave many Dreamers in America without the ability to apply for legal protections – and brings those who currently rely on DACA to live and work lawfully in the U.S. one step closer to the likely demise of the program. World Relief laments the ongoing uncertainty this ruling produces. We urge Congress to act immediately to provide a permanent solution for all Dreamers.

“Americans, including many evangelical Christians, are exhausted by Congress’ decades-long failure to pass even the most common-sense, broadly-popular immigration proposal. Dreamers deserve a path to citizenship,” **said Myal Greene, President and CEO of World Relief.** “I’m praying that this troubling judicial decision will finally spur members of Congress to work together to pass the Dream Act, or other similar legislation, that would provide Dreamers the legal affirmation of what we already know to be true: That this is their home and they belong here.”

Over the last decade, DACA has protected [more than 830,000 individuals](#), allowing them to work lawfully and receive an education. World Relief expresses concern about the ongoing uncertainty for Dreamers and their families who contribute to our economy and communities. We urge the Biden administration to work with Congress to deliver a long-needed solution for DACA recipients by passing bipartisan legislation, such as the [Dream Act of 2023](#) or [The Dignity Act](#), that grants DACA recipients and other Dreamers a permanent pathway to citizenship.

Without congressional intervention, today’s decision will likely be appealed to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, which already has concurred with Judge Hanen’s past finding that DACA was created unlawfully. From there, the case will head to the U.S. Supreme Court, which in 2016 struck down a similar Deferred Action program before it went into effect. There is a high likelihood that the high court will eventually terminate DACA entirely, withdrawing work authorization from the [roughly 600,000](#) individuals who currently rely upon DACA to work lawfully, support themselves and their families and be protected from the threat of deportation.

“There’s no reason for Congress to wait until further judicial decisions have thrown the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of our Dreamer neighbors into further turmoil,” **said Matthew Soerens, Vice President of Advocacy and Policy at World Relief.** “They can solve this challenge now by passing legislation to allow Dreamers to apply for permanent legal status and eventually for citizenship in the United States. Whether that’s a stand-alone bill or a part of a

larger package of immigration legislation addressing other timely priorities, we urge Congress to put aside partisan divisions and take action now.”

Working through a network of Department of Justice-recognized immigration legal services programs in locations throughout the United States, as well as through church-based legal clinics that it helps to support, World Relief has assisted in filing more than 6,300 DACA applications since 2012, and has [consistently advocated](#) for a permanent pathway to citizenship for Dreamers. We now call upon Congress to provide these individuals with the chance to fully integrate into the country they call home.

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About World Relief

[World Relief](#) is a global Christian humanitarian organization whose mission is to empower the local church to serve the most vulnerable. The organization was founded in the aftermath of World War II to respond to the urgent humanitarian needs of war-torn Europe. Since then, for over 75 years, across 100 countries, World Relief has partnered with local churches and communities to develop sustainable, locally-driven solutions to some of the world’s greatest problems. To learn more, visit worldrelief.org.