

January 12, 2017

The Honorable Lindsey O. Graham
U.S. Senate
290 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
U.S. Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Graham and Senator Durbin:

On behalf of the American Council on Education and the undersigned higher education associations representing the nation's two- and four-year public and private colleges and universities, I write in support of the "Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy" (BRIDGE) Act. We applaud your leadership in introducing the BRIDGE Act and support its passage as soon as possible this year.

As you well know, there are a number of young people who were brought to this country as children by their parents. Many of them have no ties or even memories of the countries from which they came. They consider themselves to be American, just like their classmates, friends, and neighbors, and in most ways they are. Unfortunately, as undocumented immigrants through no fault of their own, they are unable to pursue their dreams.

In the last several years, thousands of these young people came out of the shadows and registered with the federal government, seeking deferred action under the Obama Administration's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program which granted eligible recipients temporary permission to stay in the U.S. and obtain work permits. More than 750,000 young people received DACA, many of whom are enrolled in college.

Addressing the uncertain future of the DACA program as well as concerns about the program's sanction, the BRIDGE Act would provide temporary relief from deportation and employment authorization to DACA recipients or DACA eligible individuals for three years. The bill would extend fundamental fairness to these students, permitting them to continue studying or working and establish a firm statutory basis for the program while Congress debates legislation addressing a permanent solution.

As we know that these young people have much to offer our society, we strongly support the BRIDGE Act. We look forward to working closely with you to help ensure that this important legislation is enacted as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Molly Corbett Broad
President

MCB/ldw

Higher Education letter endorsing the BRIDGE Act

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On behalf of:

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

American Association of Community Colleges

American Association of State Colleges and Universities

American Council on Education

Association of American Universities

Association of Community College Trustees

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Council for Advancement and Support of Education

Council for Christian Colleges & Universities

Council for Higher Education Accreditation

Council for Opportunity in Education

Council of Graduate Schools

EDUCAUSE

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

UNCF