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For Immediate Release

Dream Come True: Obama Administration Announces Relief for DREAMers

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Washington. D.C. - The American Immigration Council applauds today's announcement by the Obama administration that it will grant deferred action to undocumented youth who were brought to the United States as small children and who have been raised and educated in communities around the country. Today's announcement builds on the prosecutorial discretion initiatives already undertaken by the White House and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and was done to ensure that eligible young people do not fall through the cracks, that resources are used wisely, and that humanitarian factors are considered when enforcing our immigration laws.

Deferred action is not permanent legal status or citizenship but rather a way to allow those young people, who have been in this country since they were young, to complete their education, continue their military service or begin their careers. The grant of deferred action will be issued on a case-by-case basis and is renewable every two years.

Deferred action has long been available on an individual basis, but in certain compelling circumstances, past administrations have found it more efficient, predictable, and practical to designate a broader group of individuals who share common characteristics as presumptively eligible for deferred action.

Today's announcement will create the necessary space to allow Congress to craft a more permanent solution that will extend legal status to these young people who are American in all but their country of birth.

According to DHS, deferred action will be offered to young people between the ages of 15-30 who came to the U.S. before the age of 16 and have been in the country for at least five years, have no criminal history, and are in the country as of today.

The following is a statement from Benjamin Johnson, Executive Director of the American Immigration Council:

"The administration has acted responsibly and compassionately to a growing humanitarian crisis - thousands of undocumented young people, whose talents and energy are incredibly valuable to this country, languish while Congress refuses to act on the DREAM Act. The memo issued by Secretary Napolitano lays out in clear and compelling language the need for our immigration laws to be enforced in a way that recognizes the impact on the lives of these young people. The administration has recognized that bipartisan support exists in Congress for addressing this issue and is giving Congress the time to reach a consensus by taking the immediate threat of deportation off the table. Everyone benefits from this plan: the young people whose futures will no longer be on hold, the Members of Congress from both parties who are interested in developing real solutions, and the public who deserve a more meaningful conversation on immigration. To be clear, a permanent solution must be found that allows these young people to become full citizens. But until Congress acts, the deferred action program offers the breathing room needed to ensure that no more young lives are jeopardized through senseless deportations."

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