

ROLANDO LAVARRO

Jersey City Council President

PRESS RELEASE

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For more information:

Council President Rolando Lavarro

JERSEY CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT LAVARRO CALLS FOR NJ A.G. TO JOIN CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT AND FOR CONGRESS TO PROTECT DACA

"To say that I am appalled and outraged would be an understatement," said Council President Rolando Lavarro in reaction to the Trump administration's decision to end DACA. "With these resolutions, we want to send a message to our DREAMers that Jersey City is their home and their family. We will not turn our backs on the children and young people of our community." The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was established in 2012 by former President Barack Obama, with reported 800,000 individuals currently enrolled in the program.

"DACA participants represent everything that is right about our country. DREAMers aren't just living in America. They are the living embodiment of American values. It is heartless and callous to leave these young people - people who have only known the United States as their home - dangling in the wind."

"We will defend Jersey City's DREAMers and will urge the New Jersey attorney general and federal representatives in Congress to defend DACA and our DREAMers and make it permanent."

Lavarro's resolutions will be voted on at its regular Council meeting on Wednesday, 6pm.

According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, New Jersey had 22,024 DACA recipients through March 31, 2017. New Jersey ranks 9th in the top states with DACA beneficiaries. A NJ.com article reports that DREAMers of New Jersey are mostly from Mexico, Ecuador, Korea, Guatemala and India, with the highest numbers from Mexico. The largest number of New Jersey's DACA recipients fall in the 18-21 age group, and had formal education till ninth grade. New Jersey Policy Perspective estimates that losing DREAMers would cost New Jersey approximately \$1.6 billion every year in its Gross Domestic Product.

To apply for DACA, undocumented immigrants must pay a \$495 application fee, submit various forms, and produce documents showing they meet the requirements. Meeting the requirements does not guarantee acceptance into the program. To be eligible, undocumented immigrants must fulfill basic requirements including having entered the United States prior to June 2007 and before their 16th birthday; must be under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012; must currently be in school, a high school graduate or be honorably discharged from the military; and must not have been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor or three other misdemeanors, or otherwise pose a threat to national security.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, an estimated 40% of Jersey City's population is foreign-born. Figures from the New Jersey Dream Act Coalition state that undocumented immigrants make up 8.6% of the state's workforce and paid \$446.1 million in state and local taxes in 2010.

Lavarro has been a vocal advocate of DACA and DREAMers. In 2013, Lavarro sponsored resolution in support of state legislation for Tuition Equity for DREAMers.

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