



DHS Cancels Promise to Deport “Dreamers” — Passes Ball to Congress

During two days of testimony before the House Homeland Security Committee that began on June 7, Homeland Security Secretary John F. Kelly (shown) indicated that he would keep protecting 780,000 “Dreamers” from deportation and hoped Congress would grant them permanent status. “Dreamers” is a term applied to young people brought into the country illegally as minors who are eligible to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and eligibility for a work permit. This is done under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that was initiated in June 2012 by a policy memorandum sent from former DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano.



“You’ve got to solve this problem,” Kelly told the committee, according to *The Daily Caller*.

“I’m not going to let the Congress off the hook. You’ve got to solve it.”

The Daily Caller also reported that President Trump told the Associated Press in April that DACA recipients, or “Dreamers,” can “rest easy.” He described it as “case of heart,” and said ICE won’t go “after the “Dreamers.”

The term “Dreamers” was coined because DACA granted privileges that were originally proposed under a legislative agenda called the DREAM Act (an acronym for Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors). The DREAM Act was introduced in several Congresses during the period 2001 through 2011, but was never passed by the Senate in any of its versions.

Having failed to get the legislation he wanted, former President Obama eventually decided to unconstitutionally circumvent Congress, announcing on June 15, 2012 that his administration would stop deporting young illegal aliens (referred to as “undocumented immigrants”) who match certain criteria previously proposed under the DREAM Act.

The *Washington Times* reported that Kelly also told the committee that he doubts his ability to deport the approximately 250,000 aliens from Central American countries who have been in the United States for nearly two decades under “temporary” protected status. These aliens came here under a program designed to exempt from deportation people who fled countries suffering natural disasters.

The *Times* reported that Kelly also said he hoped Congress would grant the “Dreamers” permanent legal status, which was not the platform that Donald Trump campaigned on. In an August 31, 2016 speech, Trump said: “We will immediately terminate President Obama’s two illegal executive amnesties in which he defied federal law and the Constitution to give amnesty to approximately five million illegal



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immigrants, five million.”

The *Times* report also cited Kelly’s warning to Congress that if they wait to grant permanent status to the Dreamers, a future DHS secretary might take a stricter line on them and fully cancel President Obama’s 2012 DACA amnesty.

Since the idea of giving Dreamers permanent legal status goes against the platform on which Trump was elected, Kelly’s proposals to Congress were not met with universal approval.

The *Times* quoted Matt O’Brien, a former immigration official who is now with the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), an organization that seeks to significantly reduce both legal and illegal immigration. O’Brien said he fears Republicans who run Washington would leap at a deal that would grant a permanent amnesty to Dreamers — but he said that move would come with political peril.

“FAIR’s position has always been that we want to see the border secured and the rule of law enforced. Trump made a campaign promise that he was going to repeal DACA, and that’s a promise I think he should keep if he wants to retain the support of those who put him in office,” O’Brien said.

As the *Times* writer noted: “The danger in an amnesty has always been the message it would send to potential migrants. The 1986 amnesty, far from solving the problem, paved the path for the current illegal immigrant population, which is estimated at 11 million.”

In an article last November, we optimistically predicted that with the election of Donald Trump, who promised to roll back many of the Obama administration’s executive decrees, “the DAPA [an expansion of DACA] amnesty program is as good as dead.”

We may have counted our chickens before they were hatched, however. Secretary Kelly’s statements to the House Homeland Security Committee indicate that he is willing to put DAPA/DACA back on life support.



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