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Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of the Union for Reform Judaism, whose over 900 congregations across North America encompass more than 1.5 million Reform Jews, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, whose membership includes more than 2,000 Reform rabbis, I urge you to immediately pass a clean Dream Act of 2017 (S. 1615/H.R. 3440).

With the Administration's decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, thousands of undocumented youth, known as DREAMers, are now at great risk of detention and deportation. DREAMers are undocumented immigrants who arrived in the United States as children and grew up in this country; their average age upon arrival was six-and-a-half. Many DREAMers have no memory or understanding of a home other than the United States. They are our children, our friends, and our neighbors. That have contributed their skills and talents to our country, served in the military, and strengthened our economy.

You and your fellow members of Congress must immediately act to protect DREAMers and ensure there is no gap between the end of the program and a permanent, legislative fix. The bipartisan Dream Act would grant current DACA recipients permanent residence status on a conditional basis. It would permit conditional permanent residents to then obtain lawful permanent residence status and provide a pathway to citizenship for DREAMers who attend college, work in the U.S., or serve in the military. The bill would also improve college affordability for undocumented youth by changing rules that limit their access to in-state tuition and college loans. It is imperative that Congress passes a clean bill focused solely on protecting DREAMers from deportation.

We are inspired by Jewish tradition which is clear on the treatment of immigrants. Leviticus commands, "When strangers sojourn with you in your land, you shall not do them wrong. The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (19:33-34). The DREAMers who have grown up in the United States are not strangers; they are members of our communities nationwide. Yet this biblical teaching reminds us of the importance of a just immigration system. It is imperative that Congress act to support these young people who want to give back to the only country they know as home.

We call upon you to provide a legislative fix to this most pressing issue. We urge you to immediately pass a clean Dream Act, the first step towards comprehensive immigration reform that is compassionate and fair.

Sincerely,
Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner
Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism