

Evangelical Immigration Table

Council for Christian Colleges
and Universities

Ethics and Religious Liberty
Commission of the Southern
Baptist Convention

Korean Churches for
Community Development/Faith
and Community Empowerment

National Association of
Evangelicals

National Hispanic Christian
Leadership Conference

The Wesleyan Church

World Relief

February 15, 2018

Dear Members of Congress,

We are encouraged by the ongoing serious debate to ensure a legislative solution for the special category of undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children, known as Dreamers. We are praying for you as you negotiate, mindful of the dramatic consequences congressional decisions will have on the lives of these young people, many of whom are integral members of our local churches, colleges and universities, and other Christian communities.

In the midst of the debate, we are concerned with the proposals to significantly restrict family reunification opportunities that have long formed the core of U.S. immigration policy. Our laws currently allow for U.S. citizens to petition for their close family members—children, parents, and siblings. Current law recognizes that God established the family as the foundation of any healthy society.

Immigrants who arrive to the U.S. to the welcome of their close family members are better able to integrate and participate in our economic growth. Indeed, our pro-family immigration policy increases our ability to attract high skilled immigrants who do not want to be separated from their families.

Political slogans that attack family reunification convey a misleading impression of a single immigrant pulling a large group of other immigrants into America. Current law does not allow citizens to petition for extended family members such as cousins, uncles and aunts, or grandparents. Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) can petition only for their spouse and unmarried sons and daughters—and they are generally required to wait at least two years to be reunited. U.S. Citizens can file additional petitions for married children, parents, and siblings. These processes also can involve waiting years or decades. Simply put, the misleading idea that immigrants bring an unlimited chain of extended family members with them to our country is false.

The existing family sponsorship categories are limited and, we believe, should remain in place to preserve the unity of families. The positive social and economic contributions of immigrant families to the United States are significant and should be considered in any immigration debate.

We urge you to work on a bipartisan basis to find a permanent solution that allows Dreamers to earn citizenship in the only country they have known as home, achieves lasting border security improvements for the safety of our country and the integrity of our immigration laws, and avoids making dramatic cuts to existing laws for family reunification.

Sincerely,

Leith Anderson, President, National Association of Evangelicals

Scott Arbeiter, President, World Relief

Shirley V. Hoogstra, President, Council for Christian Colleges and Universities

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Baptist Convention

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Conference