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State Representative  
56<sup>th</sup> House District

Thankyou Chairwoman Roegner, Vice Chairman Lipps, Ranking Member Leland, and fellow Members of the Ohio House Federalism and Interstate Relations Committee. It is my honor to bring before you House Concurrent Resolution 15, to restore the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program.

HCR 15 would call upon the President of the United States to immediately restore the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program and call upon Congress to pass the DREAM Act of 2017. The DACA program allows certain undocumented immigrants who were brought into this country as children to receive a renewable two year reprieve from deportation, as well as a work permit. The five-year-old policy allows them to remain without fear of immediate removal from the country and gives them the right to work legally.

These children and young adults were brought to this nation with their parents before an age where they would have had a say in the matter, sometimes too young to even remember. They were raised here, go to school here, pledge allegiance to our flag, and for all intents and purposes are American children and young adults. Put simply, The United States is the only home they've ever known or wanted. *They are Americans in every conceivable way, except citizenship.* The end of this program would cause the forced deportation of over 800,000 people to countries they have never known, in many cases speaking languages they don't speak.

Consistent surveys show the Public supports DACA. An April 2017 survey of registered voters found that 78% of American voters support giving Dreamers the chance to stay permanently in America, including 73% of Trump voters. Only 14% of all voters believe Dreamers should be deported. Our Governor is included in that 78%. In September, Governor Kasich invited Dreamers in jeopardy to "come to Ohio." In his words, "imagine if you were one of them ... striving to be a part of America and to make something of yourself and all of a sudden you could be deported?" "They oughta be able to stay here." These comments were echoed by members of our Congressional delegation from both parties.

This is not just the right thing to do morally; it is right for our economy. As soon as President Trump ordered the end of DACA early last September, CEO's from a broad section of industries signed a letter opposing the repeal. The original group of backers included the CEOs of Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, and Alphabet (parent

company of Google). Later, the CEOs of AT&T, Best Buy and Wells Fargo joined the fray. All told, over 800 CEOs from across the tech, retail and financial industries have signed the letter in opposition. Their argument was simple, logical, and without politics: "Dreamers are vital to the future of our companies and our economy. With them, we grow and create jobs. They are part of why we will continue to have a global competitive advantage." I would note that Ohio Cities like Columbus, Cleveland, and my hometown of Lorain are currently competing against 476 other cities in our nation for Amazon to relocate here. What would it say for us to stand in support of these workers, many of whom are already employed at Amazon?

I want to stress that these are children and young adults who are actively studying, employed, or contributing to our country in other ways. All DACA recipients grew up in America, registered with our government, submitted to extensive background checks, and are diligently giving back to our communities and paying income taxes. More than 97 percent are in school or in the workforce, 5 percent started their own business, 65 percent have purchased a vehicle, and 16 percent have purchased their first home. At least 72 percent of the top 25 Fortune 500 companies count DACA recipients among their employees.

In Ohio, DACA has allowed more than 4,400 young people to come forward, pass background checks, and live and work legally in the country. These DACA recipients have had their protection renewed by the US Department of Homeland Security more than 5,100 times. If any of you have dealt with the immigration process for friends or family before, these are not easy processes to get through. We ask a lot of DACA participants. If they commit a misdemeanor, DACA students can be deported. If they flail in school, they can be deported. If they even slow in contributing to our country, their participation is questioned. Members of the Committee, it is possible that we do not have a more contributive, participant, active, (and less criminal) population of our community.

DACA is a tool, a bootstrap if you will, one of those that our Legislature frequently talks about that can be used for upward mobility. A recent nationwide survey found that after receiving DACA, recipients moved to jobs with better pay (63 percent), gaining greater access to employment that matched their education and training (49 percent) and to jobs with better working conditions (48 percent).

What those CEO's advocate for is reflected in the numbers. Of the 800,000 young people who participate in the program, 685,000 are currently employed. Ending DACA and deporting its participants would result in the loss of \$460.3 billion, almost half a trillion dollars from the national GDP over the next decade, as well as \$24.6 billion in Social Security and Medicare tax contributions. Among the 4,400 some participants in

Ohio, ending DACA would cost this state more than \$251.6 million in annual GDP losses. Having just been through a budget shortfall, we need revenue.

This legislation would call upon President Trump to immediately restore the DACA program. Furthermore, it would memorialize the Congress to pass the DREAM Act. The DREAM Act was introduced in the Senate ([S. 1615](#)) by Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and companion legislation was introduced in the House ([H. 3440](#)) by Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA). Both bills are bipartisan. The DREAM Act would allow those who were DACA recipients conditional permanent resident status. After 8 years, They would then be allowed to apply for a Green Card if they worked a certain amount of time, go to college, or serve in the military. After another 5 years, they would be allowed to apply for citizenship.

With all this said, it is unconscionable for our Federal Government to end the DACA program, deporting hundreds of thousands and causing irreparable harm to our communities and our economy. America is the only home they've ever known. The America I know isn't a nation where we punish children for their parents' actions. These members of our community need our help. This is not a political football; these are real people contributing to Ohio. For their sake, for the sake of our communities, for the sake of our economy, I urge your support of HCR 15.

Thank you for your time. I welcome any questions or comments from the Committee.