

# Archbishop Lori supports call-in day to urge Congress to save DACA

WASHINGTON — After the Senate failed Feb. 15 to garner the 60 votes needed to move a bill forward to protect the “Dreamers,” officials of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops announced a “National Catholic Call-In Day to Protect Dreamers” Feb. 26.

“We are deeply disappointed that the Senate was not able to come together in a bipartisan manner to secure legislative protection for the Dreamers,” the USCCB officials said in a joint statement Feb. 19.

“With the March 5th deadline looming, we ask once again that members of Congress show the leadership necessary to find a just and humane solution for these young people, who daily face mounting anxiety and uncertainty,” they said.

The joint statement was issued by Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, USCCB president; Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, USCCB vice president; and Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, Texas, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration.

“We are also announcing a National Catholic Call-In Day to Protect Dreamers,” the three prelates said. They asked U.S. Catholics “to call their members of Congress next Monday, Feb. 26, to protect Dreamers from deportation, to provide them a path to citizenship, and to avoid any damage to existing protections for families and unaccompanied minors in the process.”

They added: “Our faith compels us to stand with the vulnerable, including our immigrant brothers and sisters. We have done so continually, but we must show our support and solidarity now in a special way. Now is the time for action.”

Archbishop William E. Lori asked Catholics in the Archdiocese of Baltimore to participate in the call-in day.

“I encourage the faithful to let our lawmakers know that we stand with the young

people served by DACA,” he said. “As Catholics and people of faith, we are called to defend life at every stage, and the lives of these young people are being unnecessarily being put at risk by the threat of deportation and separation from the only country many of them have ever known, as well as separation from family, friends, jobs, schools and their livelihood.”

By day’s end Feb. 15, members of the U.S. Senate had rejected four immigration proposals, leaving it unclear how lawmakers will address overall immigration reform and keep the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program in place.

Needing 60 votes for Senate passage, a bipartisan measure that included a path to citizenship for an estimated 1.8 million Dreamers — those eligible for DACA — and \$25 billion for a border wall failed by six votes. The final vote was 54-45. A bill the Trump administration was supporting was defeated 39 to 60. Two other bills also failed.

The U.S. House was pressing on with its own bill, which by mid-day Feb. 16 was not yet up for a floor vote. Described as “hard line” by opponents, it includes keeping DACA in place, funding a border wall, ending the Diversity Immigrant Visa program, limiting family-based visas, requiring employers to verify job applicants’ immigration status and withholding federal grants from so-called “sanctuary” cities.

The U.S. House and Senate will be in recess for a week following the Presidents Day holiday.

The bishops and countless other immigration advocates have urged members of Congress to preserve DACA and protect the programs beneficiaries by passing the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act, or DREAM Act, which has long been proposed. The bill is what gives DACA recipients the “Dreamer” name.

*Para la versión en español haga clic aquí.*

*George P. Matysek Jr. contributed to this story.*

*Copyright ©2018 Catholic News Service/U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.*