



March 10, 2017

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Graham and Durbin:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to share our support for S. 128, the Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy (BRIDGE) Act. We applaud your work on this important legislation that will protect students who have lawful status to be in this country from deportation.

ACP is the largest medical specialty organization and the second largest physician group in the United States. ACP members include 148,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness.

S. 128 would allow people who are eligible for or who have received work authorization and temporary relief from deportation through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to continue living in the U.S. with permission from the federal government for three years after the date of enactment of this legislation. The DACA program grants individuals lawful presence in the U.S. including work authorization, Social Security numbers, and in many cases state IDs and driver's licenses, which make attending medical school and residency training possible for individuals with DACA status. S. 128 would not provide a pathway to U.S. citizenship but would rather only allow people who are eligible for-or already have-DACA status to receive work authorization and provisional protected presence. The objective of this legislation is to allow students protected under DACA to continue to live in the United States as Congress considers immigration reforms that may grant them permanent lawful residency to remain in this country.

ACP supports this legislation as we are concerned about the potential deportation of undocumented medical students, residents, fellows, practicing physicians, and others who came to the United States due to the actions of their parents ("Dreamers") and have or are eligible for DACA status. The deportation of students eligible for the DACA program would have a harmful impact on our future physician population. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), in 2016, 108 students with DACA status applied to medical school,

and 34 students with DACA status entered medical school, bringing total medical school enrollment to approximately 70 students. As these students train to become physicians, they will have the experience and background necessary to treat an increasingly racially and ethnically diverse patient population to fulfill the cultural, informational, and linguistic needs of their patients.

ACP released a comprehensive [statement](#) on U.S. immigration policy that includes support for the continuation of the DACA program, the passage of BRIDGE legislation to ensure a temporary stay of deportation for individuals with DACA status, and a path to legal residency for undocumented children who came to the United States due to the actions of their parents. We urge Congress to approve the BRIDGE Act to ensure that these people can continue to live, work, and study in this country while Congress debates broader legislation to fix our broken immigration system. We also urge Congress to promptly enact legislation that would permanently protect individuals with DACA status from deportation as well as the establishment of a path to legal immigration status for undocumented children who came to the United States due to the actions of their parents (“Dreamers”). These individuals should also have access to federal student loans and other appropriate opportunities.

We commend you for introducing this legislation that provides for the continuation of the DACA status for individuals eligible for this program. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Brian Buckley at bbuckley@acponline.org or at 202-261-4543.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nitin Damle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nitin S. Damle, MD, MS, MACP
President