



December 4, 2014

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the First Focus Campaign for Children (FFCC), a bipartisan advocacy organization dedicated to making children and families a priority in federal policy and budget decisions, I write in strong opposition to the “Preventing Executive Overreach on Immigration Act of 2014” (H.R. 5759). The bill would not only prevent the President from moving forward with recently announced programs that would protect immigrant youth and families from deportation, but it could put other vulnerable individuals at risk of deportation, such as relatives of military personnel and trafficking victims.

The FFCC has long advocated for both the DREAM Act and comprehensive immigration reform that would provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented youth and families. Given the lack of progress by Congress, we have also advocated for executive action to halt the devastating separation of families due to deportation. We oppose H.R. 5759’s intent to prevent any expansion of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, a program that has already benefitted hundreds of thousands of immigrant youth who entered the U.S. as children by enabling them to work legally, freely pursue their education, obtain drivers licenses, and better contribute to our society.

We are also disturbed with H.R. 5759’s goal to prevent the Executive branch from providing temporary relief to undocumented parents of U.S. citizens and LPRs. The new Deferred Action for Parental Accountability (DAPA) program has the potential to improve the lives of up to 4.5 million U.S. citizen children currently living in mixed-status families. Research shows that a parent’s deportation, or simply the fear alone of a parent being deported, can harm children’s mental and physical health and overall well-being. Research also documents that a parent’s undocumented status can impede their child’s healthy development as undocumented parents are less able to access stable employment or critical resources for their children. The DAPA program would provide parents with work authorization and temporary reprieve from deportation, enabling them to better provide and care for their children.

In conclusion, we believe HR 5759 is a reckless proposal that undermines our American values and does nothing to fix our immigration system. Rather than attempt to block the recent Executive immigration actions and maintain a status quo that harms children, we urge the House of Representatives to advance immigration reform that would provide a permanent solution for immigrant children and families.

Sincerely,

Bruce Lesley
President