



Rand Paul Is Leading a Bipartisan Effort to Fix One of the Government's Worst Immigration Laws

Dreamers' families and their entire way of life are in the US, yet they become a criminal overnight based on an arbitrary birthday.

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Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) [introduced](#) a bipartisan bill alongside Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA) on Wednesday that provides a pathway to citizenship for the nation's 200,000 "Documented Dreamers."

What's a "Documented Dreamer?" I'm glad you asked, as many American citizens remain unaware of the significant problems a person might face to "come here legally."



The term is used to refer to the children of long-term visa holders in the US who were brought to the country by parents or guardians.

Typically, their families are waiting for decades on the green card backlog, sort of like a waiting room for legal status. In this circumstance, a child is essentially kicked out of their place in line when they come of age.

Other dreamers have parents who came here on a business visa or another type of visa, and many of these actually punish people if they attempt to get a green card. These families, and their children, are therefore never in line for a green card to begin with—even if they own businesses in the US.

As the law currently stands, these children must self-deport when they come of age. Some are able to legally stay past their 21st birthday if they go to college on a student visa, but that's usually the end of the road. This means they face returning to countries they have largely never known as they enter adulthood. Many of them do not speak the language or understand the culture. Their families and their entire way of life are in the US, yet they become a criminal overnight based on an arbitrary birthday.

Paul and Padilla's new legislation is called the America's Children Act, and it's pretty straightforward.

The bill would provide a pathway to permanent residency (which is different from citizenship) for dreamers. Under this proposal, the child's age would be locked into line for a green card on the day they file for one, rather than based on the date the government actually gets to their application. It also allows Dreamers to work while they wait starting at age 16, and continuing into adulthood so long as they graduate college.

For over a decade, the country has been at a stalemate on immigration. And while the policy discussions rage, many forget that there are real lives hanging in the balance. Both major political parties continue to put people

in border camps, both continue to deport large numbers of people, and both continue to direct our law enforcement agencies to apprehend people based on their immigration status.

The issue with the Dreamers is yet another example of that. Forcing a child to leave their family and rip their lives apart due to government backlog is a heinous thing to do. Put yourself in their shoes, in their family's shoes. They've tried to do things the "right" way and are still sentenced to such a fate.

On top of that, we waste valuable resources policing these innocent people's immigration status. Imagine what could be done to stop real crime and violence with those resources. If anyone is actually concerned about nefarious people coming across our border, they ought to be the loudest calling for streamlined immigration. Let the people who just want to live and work do just that, and then we could focus our attention on actual crime.

When it comes to the Dreamers, it is important to remember that their status is more a factor of government backlog than it is a question of whether or not they should be allowed to be here. And while they wait for that verdict, operating under constant threat from our officials, this community continues to be a tremendous value add for our economy, [contributing](#) \$42 billion to our annual GDP. These are the people we want here.

The fact that a young person could be torn from their family and home, just as they are embarking on adulthood is a chilling one. It is imperative that we find a way to ensure these lives are no longer hanging in the balance. Doing so will make us a richer country, economically, culturally, and morally.



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