Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the 19,000 cities and towns represented by the National League of Cities (NLC), I am writing to urge Congress to take immediate legislative action to institutionalize protections for the 800,000 hardworking young immigrants who gained protection through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

Through the Administration’s actions today, undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children are once again left in a state of limbo. These Dreamers, who call this country home, deserve to have protections that are guaranteed beyond election cycles.

NLC calls on Congress to work quickly to pass comprehensive immigration reform that includes stronger border enforcement as well as components of the DREAM Act, allowing undocumented workers who came to our country as children a path towards permanent legal status and eventually U.S. citizenship. With the elimination of DACA, not only will the U.S. GDP potentially decrease by $460 billion and create a large hole in our local workforce — countless families in our cities would be torn apart and lives upended. Additionally, there are currently 8,000 -10,000 Dreamers serving in our armed forces, living in our military communities across the country, whose careers and futures would be forever changed. These are children and families that live in our cities and towns and the impact of this decision will have reverberating effects throughout our communities.

With the short timeline provided by the Administration to ensure protections to the Dreamers across our country, we hope that Congress will make it a top priority to address not only legislative protections for this population, but do so within the context of comprehensive immigration reform. As you work together to create solutions, we hope that you will address these critical components:

- DREAM Act protections, including a pathway to citizenship, to the hundreds of thousands impacted by today’s actions.
• Provide an appropriate, legal means of immigration for foreign nationals that want to work here temporarily, become legal permanent residents, or gain citizenship.
• Establish a process whereby undocumented immigrants currently living in the U.S. may earn legalized status and a path to citizenship with respect to those waiting to adjust their status or those waiting on lists in their home countries.
• Enforcement of current immigration laws, both consistently and vigorously.
• Respect for the roles of local and federal law enforcement that do not transfer the responsibility of U.S. immigration laws to local personnel by making undocumented status in the U.S. a criminal offense.
• Strengthen worksite enforcement capacity and provide employers with an employee verification system that utilizes up-to-date technology that minimizes fraud.
• Provision of financial and technical assistance to local governments to alleviate the local impact of new immigrants, including the costs of providing social services, health care, education, language services and civil integration.

On behalf of city leaders across the country, I thank you for quickly addressing this critical issue impacting the economic vitality of communities across our great nation. NLC looks forward to working with you on this critical issue. To that end, please consider NLC a resource by contacting Stephanie Martinez-Ruckman, NLC’s Program Director for Human Development, at martinez-ruckman@nlc.org or 202-626-3098.

Sincerely,

Matt Zone
President, National League of Cities
Fifteenth Ward Councilmember
Cleveland, Ohio