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TEACHFORAMERICA

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TEACH FOR AMERICA FILES AMICUS BRIEF URGING UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT TO PREVENT ELIMINATION OF DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA) PROGRAM

240 DACA recipients have joined TFA to teach in public schools, working to increase student success and to end educational inequity for all, and are role models for undocumented students

NEW YORK (October 7, 2019) – Teach For America filed an [amicus brief](#) on Friday urging the United States Supreme Court to uphold the findings of lower courts and prevent the Administration from ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which has been in place for the last seven years.

Since 2013, Teach For America has actively recruited, trained, and supported DACAmented individuals to teach in classrooms across our country. In the last six years, over 240 DACA recipients have joined Teach For America and have gone on to teach and lead in our nation’s classrooms.

TFA alumna Miriam Gonzalez Avila (Los Angeles Region Corps Member, 2016) is a respondent in the case before the Supreme Court. Miriam was a corps member teaching at Crown Preparatory Academy in Los Angeles, a public charter school with a focus on STEM education, when she became a party to a case in California on the Administration’s attempt to end the DACA program. The court in California found the Administration’s attempt to rescind DACA protections was illegal.

In calling on the Court to uphold lower court rulings and retain the DACA program, TFA’s amicus brief noted the vital role the program plays in educational equity for students, schools and communities:

“Teach For America counts almost 250 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (“DACA”) recipients among its corps members and alumni, including Respondent Miriam Gonzalez Avila, who was a corps member when she became a party in Garcia v. United States, No. 3:17-cv-5380 (N.D. Cal.). The organization witnesses the leadership, passion, and empathy these incredible individuals bring to serving their students, schools, and communities. An end to DACA would end their ability to work and put them at risk of deportation—a far cry from the pathway to citizenship these young people deserve. Ending DACA would undermine Teach For America’s effort to increase academic success among all students, and would severely impact undocumented students, for whom DACA teachers are particularly powerful role models. Teach For America thus has an interest in the continued vitality of DACA, and seeks to ensure that the program is not unlawfully rescinded.”

TFA educators join over 10,000 DACAmented educators across this country, on whom our school districts and, more importantly, the students and families served by them rely.

“Over the last six years we have witnessed first-hand the leadership, passion, and empathy these incredible individuals bring to serving their students, schools, and communities,” said Elisa Villanueva Beard, CEO of Teach For America. “Because of DACA, these Teach For America corps members have the opportunity to make an immediate impact on the lives of their students, and live out the simple truth, recognized by this Court, that ‘education provides the basic tools by which individuals might lead economically productive lives to the benefit of us all.’”

“Beyond serving as critical role models for undocumented students, DACA educators benefit all students in their schools. They make a tremendous impact in their classrooms. Their American story deepens all students’ understanding of the richness of the diversity of our country,” said Villanueva Beard.

Teach For America corps members and alumni make an immediate impact on the lives of children, and a lifelong commitment to achieving excellence and equity for all students, working inside and outside the classroom. TFA alumni have gone on to lead in every sector in education—as teachers, state public education chiefs, district and school leaders—and also take on inequity from outside education as well: 8 in 10 alumni work in education or in other roles in low income communities that advance the cause of excellence and equity.

In filing an amicus brief, TFA joined a number of other educational organizations arguing for DACA to continue. TFA’s amicus brief closes with a powerful argument for the important role DACA plays in education:

“The pivotal role schools play in shaping our youth makes all the more important the courts’ role in safeguarding the rights of those who sit at desks or stand at the head of classrooms. ‘[E]ducation prepares individuals to be self-reliant and self-sufficient participants in society,’ the Plyler Court wrote, decrying “governmental barriers” that present “unreasonable obstacles to advancement on the basis of individual merit.” 457 U.S. at 222. Even before that, the Court emphasized the need for ‘scrupulous protection’ of rights in the schoolhouse ‘if we are not to strangle the free mind at its source and teach youth to discount important principles of our government as mere platitudes.’ *W. Virginia State Bd. of Educ. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624, 637 (1943).

“These admonitions apply with equal force today. What will impressionable children think upon learning that their teacher has been sent far away without the government even having to establish that its actions were rational? What lessons will children learn about faith in their government, trust in social institutions, and the rule of law? How will we instill American values—the importance of keeping promises, the rewards that flow from talent and hard work—when the Department seeks to upend hundreds of thousands of lives without considering the depth of their loss or the immediacy of their suffering?”

Oral arguments before the US Supreme Court are scheduled for November 12, 2019.

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About Teach For America

Teach For America works in partnership with urban and rural communities in more than 50 regions across the country to expand educational opportunity for children. Founded in 1990, Teach For America recruits and develops a diverse corps of outstanding leaders to make an initial two-year commitment to teach in high-need schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to end educational inequity. Today Teach For America is a force of over 60,000 alumni and corps members committed to profound systemic change. From classrooms to districts to state houses across America, they’re reimagining education to realize the day when every child has an equal opportunity to learn, to grow, to influence, and to lead. For more information, visit www.teachforamerica.org and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).