



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on January 11, 2018

“Bill of Love”: Trump’s Ongoing Effort to Strike Deal With Democrats for DACA Recipients

President Trump presided over a 55-minute meeting with Republican and Democratic members of Congress on January 9 in the West Wing’s Cabinet Room — to which he invited the press corps. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss what to do with the nearly 800,000 young illegal aliens known as “Dreamers,” whose work permits are set to expire March 5. The president decided to revoke former President Obama’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which granted protection from deportation and the right to work legally in the United States to young people whose parents brought them into this country illegally.



While campaigning for the presidency, candidate Trump promised that he would “immediately terminate” DACA after being elected. However, in recent months, he has increasingly demonstrated a willingness to compromise with Democrats by supporting legislation that would offer the same protection from deportation and extended work authorization that the Obama administration granted by means of executive actions taken by former Secretaries of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano and Jeh Johnson.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced on September 5 that the DACA program will end in six months, giving Congress time to find a legislative solution for people enrolled in the program. The next day, the attorneys general of 15 states and the District of Columbia — all of whom are Democrats — filed a lawsuit in the United States District Court, Eastern District of New York to block the Trump administration from terminating the DACA program.

A few hours after Trump met with the legislators and press, a federal judge temporarily blocked the administration’s decision to end DACA. U.S. District Judge William Alsup granted a request by California and other plaintiffs to prevent the administration from ending DACA while their lawsuits play out in court. Alsup said lawyers in favor of DACA clearly demonstrated that the young illegal aliens “were likely to suffer serious, irreparable harm” without such court action. The judge also predicted that the lawyers have a strong chance of succeeding at trial.

Afterwards, the Department of Justice said the judge’s decision doesn’t change the fact that the program was an illegal circumvention of Congress, and therefore it is within the agency’s power to end it.

“The Justice Department will continue to vigorously defend this position, and looks forward to vindicating its position in further litigation,” DOJ spokesman Devin O’Malley said in a statement. Such litigation may become a moot point, however, as the Trump administration increasingly has



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shifted its position to enforce DACA strictly in an attempt to reach a compromise with Democrats in Congress.

The January 9 White House meeting revealed a very different Trump than the candidate who had so emphatically promised to immediately terminate DACA.

"I think my positions are going to be what the people in this room come up with," Trump said, as quoted by the *Washington Post*. "I am very much reliant on the people in this room."

The *Post* noted that when Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), whom the newspaper accurately described as "one of the most liberal members of the chamber," asked if the president would support "a clean DACA bill" that protects the Dreamers with no other conditions, he sounded amenable.

"Yeah, I would like to do it," Trump said.

DACA recipients are commonly referred to as "Dreamers," because former President Obama initiated DACA through executive actions after Congress failed to pass the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act). DREAM was first introduced in the Senate in 2001 and reintroduced in the 107th through 111th Congresses. It never passed both houses, but Obama was determined to implement it anyway. So on June 15, 2012, he announced that his administration would stop deporting young illegal immigrants who met certain criteria previously proposed under the DREAM Act.

The *Post* observed that Trump's compromise with Democrats on this issue apparently alarmed House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), who tried to get the president to clarify what he meant.

"Mr. President, you need to be clear, though," McCarthy said, leaning over from his seat to Trump's left. "I think what Senator Feinstein is asking here — when we talk about just DACA, we don't want to be back here two years later. You have to have security."

The *Post* reported that later on, when Trump offered a clarification — "We do a Phase 1, which is DACA and security, and we do Phase 2, which is comprehensive immigration" — McCarthy appeared to be relieved. However, steadfast conservatives who expected Trump to stick to his campaign promise might not feel the same way.

Trump provided his definition of what a "clean DACA bill" looks like. "I think a clean DACA bill to me is a DACA bill, but we take care of the 800,000 people," he said. "But I think to me, a clean bill is a bill of DACA — we take care of them, and we also take care of security."

Immigration conservatives expected Trump to "take care" of the 800,000 youthful illegal aliens by deporting them, but it appears that the president now has another plan in mind.

Among those who are skeptical about the new direction that the president is taking is conservative commentator Ann Coulter, who tweeted: "Nothing Michael Wolff could say about @realDonaldTrump has hurt him as much as the DACA lovefest right now." (Coulter was referring to Trump's recent portrayal in Wolff's book *Fire and Fury*.)

Photo: AP Images

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