



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on April 17, 2015

Government Gives Social Security Numbers to 541,000 Illegals

In an April 10 letter to Senators Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) and Ben Sasse (R-Neb.), Carolyn Colvin, the Social Security Administration's acting commissioner, stated that by the end of Fiscal Year 2014, the administration had issued 541,000 Social Security Numbers to individuals authorized to work under the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.



Colvin's letter was sent as a response to a March 12 letter from Sessions and Sasse in which the senators requested information about how many illegal immigrants have received Social Security Numbers and benefits thus far under what they referred to as President Obama's "unlawful and unconstitutional executive amnesty."

The amnesty has been granted largely through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

DACA began with an executive action ordered by President Obama and was prompted by his frustration with the failure of Congress 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, and 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.

DACA was formally initiated by a policy memorandum sent from then-Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano on June 15, 2012 to the heads of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), ordering them to practice "prosecutorial discretion" toward some individuals who were brought to this country before their 16th birthday.

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson expanded DACA when on November 20, 2014, he sent an executive action memorandum to the heads of CBP, USCIS, and ICE that removed its age cap and extended work authorization to three years. Johnson's order also expanded "deferred action" (another name for amnesty) by directing USCIS to establish a process, similar to DACA, for exercising prosecutorial discretion through the use of deferred action, on a case-by-case basis, to those individuals who have a son or daughter who is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident; have continuously resided in the United States since before January 1, 2010; and, were physically present in the United States on the date of his memorandum, and at the time of making a request for consideration of deferred action with USCIS.



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A notice posted on the USCIS website states: “U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will expand Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals on Feb. 18, 2015. That will be the first day to request DACA under the revised guidelines as part of President Obama’s recent announcements on immigration.”

In their letter, Sessions and Sasse asked Colvin how many individuals have applied for SSNs “as a result of the June 15, 2012 memorandum issued by Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano entitled ‘Exercising Prosecutorial Discretion with Respect to Individuals Who Came to the United States as Children.’”

In answer to that question, Colvin provided the figure of 541,000.

In answer to a follow-up question, asking how many individuals have applied for SSNs as a result of the November 20, 2014 memorandum issued by Johnson, Colvin replied:

None. On February 16, 2015, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas issued a preliminary injunction preventing implementation of the deferred action policies announced last November. The Social Security Administration and DHS are complying with the injunction, and DHS is therefore not accepting applications for deferred action or work authorization based on these policies at this time. We would only issue SSNs to these individuals if DHS began to accept and adjudicate applications and grant work authorization and documentation evidencing such authorization.

The February 16 injunction that Colvin referred to was issued by Judge Andrew Hanen. It has been appealed to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans, which is hearing oral arguments from both sides in the case on April 17, as we write.

In a statement posted on his Senate website, Sasse stated:

The American people have a right to know the full costs of President Obama’s unlawful executive amnesty. The White House unilaterally re-wrote the laws and taxpayers are just beginning to learn the full scope of these actions. Congress has a duty to conduct oversight and hold the Administration accountable for its actions and use of taxpayer dollars.

Granting Social Security Numbers to illegal immigrants drains the deficit-plagued public treasury in ways that most people do not even consider. For example, reported the *Washington Times*, the IRS has confirmed that getting a Social Security Number entitles illegal immigrants to retroactively claim refunds under the Earned Income Tax Credit for time they worked illegally — even if they didn’t file returns or pay taxes for those years!

Once granted SSNs, these illegal immigrants will also be placed on the road to receiving other federal Social Security benefits such as retirement and disability benefits. Americans of all political persuasions have frequently expressed concerns that our Social Security system is insolvent and that benefits might not be there when today’s workers retire. The addition of hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants to the pool will certainly place additional demands on Social Security and make the situation potentially much worse. The fact that such people may pay into Social Security once being granted work permits — a “benefit” often claimed by those who advocate “immigration reform” — will help the situation only temporarily and just kick the can further down the road, since most claimants eventually collect more from the federal system than they pay into it. This surplus in benefits received is attributable mostly to Medicare, noted a January 6, 2011 article in *U.S. News & World Report*.



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An April 3, 2013 article in the *New York Times* noted that Medicare paid considerably more in benefits that recipients had paid in:

Analysts say that Medicare beneficiaries on average pay about \$1 for every \$3 in benefits, and the gap is projected to grow. Social Security beneficiaries who retired 20 to 40 years ago received more in benefits than they paid in taxes, but for those retiring in 2010, the amount was about even.

[A chart caption in the article noted] a single male with average wages who retired at age 65 in 2010 would have paid about as much in Social Security taxes in his lifetime as he will receive in benefits. He will receive more than \$100,000 more in Medicare benefits than he paid in taxes.

Therefore, as these amnestied immigrants reach the age of 65 and become eligible for Medicare, the net effects of making them legal will become more burdensome on the U.S. taxpayers.

Furthermore, as we have noted repeatedly, the cost of educating the children of immigrants who have come here illegally is creating a major financial burden for many local school districts, making a local as well as federal tax impact.

So the taxpayers are paying more now, and will continue to pay more later.



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