



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on January 5, 2018

## Trump and Democrats Working on Deal Over Future of DACA Recipients Before Program Expires

President Trump and his Republican allies in Congress are negotiating with Democrats to work out a plan acceptable to both sides, as the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) program, which began in 2012, nears its expiration in March. The program extends protections from deportation for an estimated 700,000 young aliens who entered the United States as children with their parents and came here illegally.



Trump called for an end to the program last September, but allowed for a six-month delay to force Congress to arrive at a solution to settling the fate of the young aliens that is acceptable to both parties.

Several media outlets reported that the White House and congressional Democrats have been discussing possible compromises on the future of DACA protections. Democrats are hoping to work out a deal to protect the youthful aliens who have been shielded from deportation by DACA. They will also “insist” on dollar-for-dollar parity between defense and domestic spending, according to a letter House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi sent to her fellow party members on January 2.

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“I think we’re narrowing the differences,” the *New York Times* quoted a January 4 statement made by John Cornyn of Texas, the Senate majority whip, following a meeting of several Republican senators at the White House with the president. The report noted that Trump has invited members of both parties to meet with him to discuss immigration next week.

The *Boston Globe* reported that congressional leaders from both parties met with top White House advisors on January 4 in hopes of reaching a permanent solution after the DACA runs out, but after the meeting each side acknowledged significant disagreements that must still be resolved.

Following the meeting, Trump said, “We need a physical border wall. We’re going to have a wall — remember that — we’re going to have a wall to keep out deadly drug dealers, dangerous traffickers and violent criminal cartels. Mexico is having a tremendous problem with crime, and we want to keep it out of our country.”

However, not everyone in government agrees on what the wall would consist of. After the meeting, Senator James Lankford (R-Okla.) said that Trump was not insisting on a massive physical wall. “People want to paint his definition, that it’s some 2,000-mile-long, 30-foot-high wall of concrete,” Lankford was quoted by the *Times*. “That’s not what he means, and that’s not what he’s trying to say.”

The senator continued: “There’s going to be border fencing in some areas, there’s going to be vehicular barricades, there’s going to be technology, greater manpower in some areas. Different parts, whether they’re mountainous or whether they’re open deserts, need different solutions.”

While campaigning for the presidency, candidate Trump promised that he would “immediately



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terminate” DACA after being elected.

However, the minority leaders in Congress, Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Senator Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), stated last September that Trump said at a White House dinner that he would support enshrining into law the protections from deportation provided under DACA.

Despite the Democrats’ statement, Trump denied afterward that he had reached any deal with them. When a reporter asked the president: “Why did the Democrats say there was a deal at dinner?” Trump replied: “There was no deal and they didn’t say they had a deal. In fact, they just put out a statement they didn’t say that at all.”

On September 14, Trump also said on Twitter, “No deal was made last night on DACA. Massive border security would have to be agreed to in exchange for consent. Would be subject to vote.”

However, Schumer and Pelosi responded by releasing a statement, which read, in part:

President Trump’s Tweets are not inconsistent with the agreement reached last night. As we said last night, there was no final deal, but ... we agreed that the President would support enshrining DACA protections into law, and encourage the House and Senate to act.

What remains to be negotiated are the details of border security, with a mutual goal of finalizing all details as soon as possible. While both sides agreed that the wall would not be any part of this agreement, the President made clear he intends to pursue it at a later time, and we made clear we would continue to oppose it.

Both sides agreed that the White House and the Democratic leaders would work out a border security package.

The top Democrats’ statement brought a quick reaction from Representative Steve King (R-Iowa), who wrote on Twitter that if the Democrats’ description of the deal is true, “Trump[’s] base is blown up, destroyed, irreparable, and disillusioned beyond repair. No promise is credible.”

In a statement he made on January 4, Trump sounded much more willing to compromise on DACA than he did back when he was running for the presidency, saying: “I can tell you the Republicans want to see it work out very well. If we have support from the Democrats, I think DACA is going to be terrific.”

In an [article last October](#), we noted that Trump sent a letter to House and Senate leaders on October 8 that outlined a long list of reforms and increased border security measures that the White House is demanding in exchange for any deal with Congress that might provide legal status for the 800,000 young aliens brought here illegally as children.

We observed that although the mainstream media such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times* all described the president’s list of demands as “hard-line,” they actually represented a retreat from Trump’s campaign promises.

Former President Obama initiated DACA with an executive action 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. Because of DACA’s origins with the DREAM Act, DACA recipients are sometimes referred to as “Dreamers.”



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With such a long legislative history of rejection by several Congresses, it is difficult to understand why Trump should feel the need to compromise with Democrats to breathe new life into DREAM/DACA in order to secure support for the rest of his immigration plan.

Photo of Mexican youth: [Clipart.com](#)

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