



Trump On Citizenship for Dreamers: “We’re Going to Morph Into It”

Speaking to members of the press at the White House briefing room on January 24, President Trump announced that he was open to a multiyear path to citizenship for the nearly 800,000 young illegal aliens known as “Dreamers,” whose work permits are set to expire March 5. These youthful illegal aliens have been granted protection from deportation and the right to work legally in the United States under former President Obama’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.



There are conditions to Trump’s offer, however. The *New York Times* reported that White House officials said the following day that citizenship for those protected under the DACA program would come only as part of a bargain that included an additional \$25 billion for border security and a crackdown on illegal immigrants, including family members of those already in the United States.

The *Times* report evidently was based on a fact sheet called “White House Framework on Immigration Reform & Border Security” that was posted on the White House website on January 25. The first section of the post deals with border security and is prefaced with the statement:

Securing the Southern and Northern border of the United States takes a combination of physical infrastructure, technology, personnel, resources, authorities, and the ability to close legal loopholes that are exploited by smugglers, traffickers, cartels, criminals and terrorists.

It is the second section of the fact sheet that lays out the terms for DACA legalization. It lists three steps to this process:

1. 10-12 year path to citizenship, with requirements for work, education and good moral character.
2. Clear eligibility requirements to mitigate fraud.
3. Status is subject to revocation for criminal conduct or public safety and national security concerns, public charge, fraud, etc.

Other sections include ways to protect the nuclear family, namely, promoting nuclear family migration by limiting family sponsorships to spouses and minor children only (for both Citizens and LPRs), and ending extended-family chain migration.

It also calls for applying these changes prospectively, not retroactively, by processing the “backlog.”

Another section calls for eliminating the visa lottery, which “selects individuals at random to come to the United States without consideration of skills, merit or public safety.” Instead, the administration proposes to reallocate the visas to reduce the family-based “backlog” and high-skilled employment “backlog.”

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



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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.

The proposal included in the “White House Framework on Immigration Reform & Border Security,” which suggests a 10-12 year path to citizenship, obviously is a radically different plan than Trump’s original promise to “immediately terminate” DACA.

A January 25 report from CNSNews.com cited comments that the president made in an impromptu meeting with reporters in his chief of staff, General John Kelly’s office the previous day before departing for Davos, Switzerland. Trump’s statement confirmed the policy for DACA enrollees outlined in the above-noted report. Trump said:

We’re going to morph into it, it’s going to happen at some point. Over a period of 10 to 12 years, somebody does a great job, they’ve worked hard — it gives incentive to do a great job. But they’ve worked hard, they’ve done terrifically, whether they have a little company or whether they’ve worked or whatever they’re doing, if they do a great job, I think it’s a nice thing to have the incentive of, after a period of years, being able to become a citizen.

A reporter asked Trump if he will extend the deadline if a DACA bill doesn’t pass by March 5, to which the president replied: “Yeah, I might do that,” then adding, “I’m not guaranteeing it.”

CNSNews noted that Trump also said dreamers should not worry about being deported when DACA ends on March 5, stating:

“Tell them not to be concerned, okay?” the president said. “Tell them not to worry about it. We’re going to solve the problem. Now it’s up to the Democrats, but they should not be concerned.”

However, noted the report, Trump also repeated that there will be no DACA deal without funding to build a border wall.

Despite the fact that Trump has retreated considerably from his original position that called for eliminating DACA and deporting those previously protected under it, the Democratic Senate leadership is still not satisfied. When the White House plan to allow as many as 1.8 million young illegal aliens (the so-called Dreamers) to become citizens — but which also called for \$25 billion in spending on a border wall and making the other changes to the immigration system, including eliminating the visa lottery system — was made public on January 25, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer was quick to condemn the plan.

“This plan flies in the face of what most Americans believe,” Schumer said on Twitter. While Trump “finally acknowledged that the Dreamers should be allowed to stay here and become citizens, he uses them as a tool to tear apart our legal immigration system and adopt the wish list that anti-immigration hardliners have advocated for years.”

Schumer’s reaction indicated that Trump is unlikely to implement an immigration plan that will satisfy his core supporters by attempting to compromise with the Democrats. He would probably be more successful by sticking to what he originally promised to those who elected him and supported him, such as his Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

Immigration conservatives expected Trump to “take care” of the 800,000 youthful illegal aliens by



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deporting them, not offering them amnesty for 10 to 12 years while they work to become citizens.

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