



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 19, 2016

NYC Board of Regents Approves Policy to Accept Applications From Illegal Aliens

The New York Board of Regents has voted to approve applications from illegal aliens to teach and practice medicine. Students qualifying under DACA — Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals — are now eligible to submit applications to the state’s licensing board after Tuesday’s vote.



Until this vote, certain professional licenses were limited to citizens or those who have legal immigration status, Fox News reports. With the board’s recent approval, DACA holders are now eligible, so long as they meet the educational requirements. The new policy will begin on June 1.

Fox News reports that New York is not alone, as California, Florida, and Nevada “also have eased some licensing restrictions.”

According to NBC News, there are approximately 18,000 New York City residents who are currently DACA recipients and therefore may benefit from the rule change.

The DACA program was instituted by the Obama administration in 2012 and allows DACA immigrants to work legally in the United States. It was created via policy memo by then-Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano after numerous failed attempts to pass the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act). The memo asked 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), to exercise “prosecutorial discretion” toward immigrants who arrived in this country before their 16th birthday.

In 2014, Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson further expanded the DACA program by removing its age cap and extending the work authorization to three years. In an executive action memorandum to the heads of the same groups that received Napolitano’s policy memo in 2012, Johnson instructed USCIS to again exercise discretion on a case-by-case basis to illegal immigrants who have a son or daughter that resides here legally and have continuously lived in the United States since before January 2010.

Critics of DACA assert that the program is a means to circumvent Congress and grant amnesty to those who reside here illegally.

The DACA program is currently facing legal challenge in the U.S. Supreme Court after U.S. District Judge Andrew S. Hanen of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas issued an order of temporary injunction to block the federal government from implementing the Obama administration’s policy memorandums that expanded DACA and implemented the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) program.



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But while the DACA program remains controversial and rests on shaky ground, the Board of Regents defends its vote. “They are American in every way but immigration status,” state Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia said in Albany. “They’ve done everything right. They’ve worked hard in school, some have even served in the military.”

Attorney General Eric Schneiderman has applauded the Regents’ vote, calling it a “critical step toward addressing our broken immigration system.”

But many who are opposed to the policy voiced their concerns during the public comment period that followed a preliminary approval of the regulations. “Why should people who are in the United States illegally be afforded the same rights and privileges as those in this country legally,” one unidentified commenter asked.

New York state Republican Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis said in February that changes such as these should not be made without a vote in the State Legislature and blamed the Obama administration for encouraging solutions such as these to the immigration problem. “The lack of urgency from Washington to reform and enforce immigration laws are leading to policies like this all over the country,” she said.



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