



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

September 21, 2017

Dear Education and Community Leaders:

In recent days, I have heard from many Vermonters concerned about the President Trump's decision to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Executive Order, signed by President Barack Obama in 2012, and how the decision will affect Dreamers living in Vermont.

This program has given many young people the ability to contribute to their communities, pursue academic opportunities and even serve in our military. And while the decision has caused deep uncertainty around their immigration status, there are underlying state and federal laws ensuring all children and young adults receive the education to which they're entitled.

Under Federal law, undocumented children and young adults have the same right to attend public primary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents (*Plyler vs. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982).)

Furthermore, in Vermont, children, including undocumented children, are required to attend school until the mandated age of 16. (*Please see* 16 VSA §1075(f) which defines residence for school purposes of alien, immigrant or refugee children in Vermont.)

These laws rightfully make our schools our most inclusive institutions, bringing together kids from all backgrounds and promoting the different experiences and perspectives among them. As educators, I know you will continue to support diversity in our schools, among our students and show compassion for those imperiled by the uncertainty around DACA.

That said, protections around the right to an education and empathy from public leaders for these young people does not go far enough if they still face the risk of deportation when they are not at school. I understand the apprehension felt by these individuals, as well as by their family and friends, are likely compounded by the inconsistent rhetoric around the decision. The uncertainty around the program in the immediate future has only complicated the situation.

I have called on Congress to act to keep this policy in place through federal legislation – something the President did leave open as a possibility. As Governor, I support the efforts of Vermont's congressional delegation to affirm the DACA program in federal statute. I feel strongly that this outcome is the only way to ensure we protect the rights of these young people, who were brought to the U.S. at a young age through no fault of their own, and know no other country.

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In the meantime, let's work together here in Vermont and set the right tone so that all children, from all backgrounds feel welcome and safe in Vermont schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Scott", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Philip B. Scott
Governor

PBS/kp