

Trump rescinds DACA, putting 800,000 youth at risk of deportation

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The Trump administration is ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the government program that offered limited protection from deportation to nearly 800,000 immigrants brought to the US as children. The administration plans to phase out the program over the next six months.

The Department of Homeland Security will not consider any new applications for legal status. Those with a DACA permit expiring before March 5, 2018, will be eligible to apply for a two-year renewal that must be requested by October 5, 2017. For all others, legal status will end as early as March 6, 2018.

If Congress fails to act, nearly 300,000 people will begin losing protections in 2018, and more than 320,000 from January to August 2019. Once their DACA status expires, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials, in collusion with local and state law enforcement, will have free rein to carry out detention and deportation.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions, well known for his decades-long career of attacking immigrants and minorities, announced the end of the program on Tuesday. His speech combined vicious law-and-order and anti-immigrant demagoguery with outright lies aimed at scapegoating immigrants for “crime, violence, and terrorism” in the US.

“The effect of this unilateral executive amnesty [DACA]...contributed to a surge of minors at the southern border that yielded terrible humanitarian consequences,” Sessions claimed. “It also denied jobs to hundreds of thousands of Americans by allowing those same illegal aliens to take those jobs.”

Trump echoed Session’s remarks on Twitter Tuesday morning following the announcement: “We are a nation of laws. No longer will we incentivize illegal immigration. Make no mistake, we are going to put the

interest of AMERICAN CITIZENS FIRST!”

The Trump administration cites the “rule of law” to justify its attack on immigrants barely a week after Trump pardoned the notorious anti-immigrant Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio, who was found guilty of criminal contempt charges for defying a federal judge’s order to stop racially profiling Latinos. Trump is himself the personification of the corporate and government criminality that operates with impunity in the United States.

As for the claim that the measures against immigrant youth are necessary to defend “American jobs,” this is an exercise in lying demagoguery. The Trump administration is composed of billionaires intent on destroying public education, health care and other social programs, while its main domestic agenda is a massive tax cut for corporations and the wealthy.

While Democrats have issued criticisms of Trump’s actions, the anti-immigrant policies of his administration are based on the actions of his predecessors, particularly the Obama administration.

In a Facebook post on Tuesday, Obama wrote that preserving DACA was “about basic decency...about whether we are a people who kick hopeful young strivers out of America, or whether we treat them the way we’d want our own kids to be treated.” He went on to assure layers within the ruling class that these young people could possibly add to the economy, “start new businesses” or even “serve in our military.”

The DACA program was initiated by Obama in June 2012, largely as a cynical maneuver to court Hispanic voters in time for the 2012 election. It was also intended as a cover for his massive crackdown on immigrants, including through the expansion of “Secure Communities,” the further militarization of the border, and institution of the mandatory nightly bed

quota of ICE detention facilities.

Implementation of the DACA program—done under the pretenses of a turn toward a more “humane” immigration policy— was carried out by the Obama administration while it oversaw the largest deportation operation US history, resulting in the expulsion of almost 3 million immigrants in his eight years in office. This included the rounding up and deportation of child immigrants fleeing Central America in 2014.

Discussions are taking place within ruling circles of combining some form of a DACA renewal with “comprehensive immigration reform,” which if passed would be part of a reactionary bipartisan measure to increase the militarization of the border and place even more onerous requirements on anyone seeking citizenship rights. The ending of DACA is part of a broader anti-immigrant offensive of the Trump administration that has gone unopposed by the Democratic Party, which has spent the past seven months denouncing Trump for being too “soft” on Russia. The Democrats have hailed moves to strengthen the grip of the military over the administration, including through the elevation of retired general John Kelly, Trump’s former Homeland Security Advisor, to chief of staff.

Kelly, who directly oversaw Trump’s anti-immigrant measures before taking on his new post, was selected by Obama in 2012 to lead the US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), the military organization responsible for Central America, South America and the Caribbean. Kelly was confirmed in his first position in the Trump administration by a bipartisan 88-11 vote in the US Senate.

The ending of DACA marks a major escalation of Trump’s war on immigrants and will have far-reaching consequences. The tools and methods of oppression being forged in the attack on immigrants under the banner of “law and order”—the massive surveillance apparatus, the collection and sharing of data, the integration of all law enforcement agencies, and the arming of the police forces with military equipment—will be used against the working class as a whole.

There is widespread opposition to the anti-immigrant policies of the Trump administration. This opposition cannot be channeled back behind the Democratic Party, which is no less beholden to the corporate elite than the

Republicans.

The defense of immigrant workers requires the independent mobilization of the entire working class, in the United States and internationally, based on a program that advances its own solution to the world economic crisis: the reorganization of global economy to meet social need, not private profit. This unity must begin with the rejection of all attempts to divide native-born and immigrant workers, regardless of their legal status, and upholding the freedom of all workers to live and work in the country of their choice with full and equal rights.



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