September 15, 2017

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
U.S. House of Representatives
2083 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Support H.R. 3440 (Dream Act 2017)

Dear Congresswoman Roybal-Allard,

On behalf of 1,600 business leaders in Los Angeles and Southern California, I write to lend our strong support for your bill H.R. 3440 (Dream Act 2017), which would allow a select group of immigrants who grew up in the U.S. the ability to continue contributing to our great nation. This legislation is critical. According to recent studies, the rescindment of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) will result in the shrinking of our labor force by 740,000 workers and reduce real gross domestic product (GDP) by $72 billion.

Specifically, the Dream Act would grant these young people conditional, permanent resident status for eight years and cancel removal proceedings if they:

- Are longtime residents who came to the U.S. as children 17 years old or younger;
- Have been continuously in the U.S. for four years preceding the date of enactment of the bill;
- Graduate from high school, obtain a GED certificate or diploma, or are enrolled in secondary school or in an education program assisting students in obtaining a high school diploma or in passing a GED or equivalent exam;
- Pass security and law enforcement background checks and pay a reasonable application fee;
- Demonstrate proficiency in the English language and a knowledge of United States history; and
- Have not committed a felony or other serious crimes and do not pose a threat to our country.

Those who were previously granted DACA would be granted conditional permanent resident status and have removal canceled.

Of the nearly 800,000 DACA recipients across the country, an overwhelming number live in California (nearly 230,000). The vast majority are employed, and almost half of them are currently in school. Without H.R. 3440, California will experience the biggest economic set back of any state in the nation, with an estimated loss of $11.6 billion in GDP.

According to a recent report by New American Economy, New Americans in Los Angeles, “In 2014, foreign-born residents contributed $232.9 billion to L.A. County’s GDP and held $70.7 billion in spending power. Six of the 13 Fortune 500 companies in L.A. County were founded by immigrants or the children of immigrants. Immigrants comprise 51.5 percent of our entrepreneurs and 43.2 percent of the employed labor force in L.A. County.”
The L.A. Area Chamber supported DACA in 2012 because we knew these young people would contribute to our state and nation if we continued to allow them to contribute to America. We have already invested in these young people by educating them in our schools, and they are now a vital part of our workforce, contributing to our economic growth and our society as teachers, engineers, nurses and small business owners. It makes no sense to squander these young people’s talents and penalize our own nation.

The business community is eager to work with you to create jobs throughout America and to rebuild our nation’s infrastructure. Thank you for your leadership in authoring this critical legislation.

Sincerely,

Gary Toebben
President & CEO
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce