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**TSTA: Congress must act now to protect the Dreamers**

The president of the Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA) and San Antonio educators will rally today at Congressman Will Hurd’s San Antonio office to encourage Congress to act now to protect more than 100,000 young, productive Texans from deportation.

The group will demonstrate in front of Hurd’s office because the congressman has not publicly committed to vote for a clean Dream Act, a law to extend the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program without tying it to other, more controversial immigration issues, such as a border wall.

“The Dreamers deserve and have earned protection from deportation and should not be used as pawns in the ongoing immigration debate,” TSTA President Noel Candelaria said. “These young people were brought to the United States as infants or young children, and this is the only home they have ever known. They have studied and achieved here, fought in our military, and they love our country. In many ways, they represent what is best about America. It would be cruel and short-sighted to deport them.”

Candelaria added: “Approximately 2,000 Dreamers are now teaching in Texas classrooms – to give their students access to the American Dream. At a time when Texas has a teacher shortage and a majority of Texas students are Hispanic, these teachers have a special ability to connect with their students and show them the importance of education.”

There are an estimated 800,000 law-abiding DACA recipients in the country, including more than 100,000 in Texas. More than 90 percent are currently employed, and their employers include most of the top Fortune 500 companies.

“Our Dreamers contribute to our nation’s prosperity and success,” Candelaria said. “Ending DACA isn’t about national security. It is about mean-spirited politics and foolishly pandering to fear.”

Under President Trump's order ending the DACA program, Dreamers will start becoming eligible for deportation in March if Congress doesn't act.

(Today's rally, Dec. 14, will be at 5 p.m. at U.S. Rep. Will Hurd's northside San Antonio office, 17721 Rogers Ranch Parkway, Suite 120.)