

Students across the country stage walk-outs protesting DACA decision

From Denver to Chicago, young people protested the action, which places hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants in danger.

SEP 5, 2017, 5:04 PM



DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA) SUPPORTERS MARCH TO THE IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT OFFICE TO PROTEST SHORTLY AFTER U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL JEFF SESSIONS' ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA), WILL BE SUSPENDED WITH A SIX-MONTH DELAY, TUESDAY, SEPT. 5, 2017, IN PHOENIX. CREDIT: AP PHOTO/MATT YORK

Students poured out of classrooms in protest following an announcement from Attorney General Jeff Sessions that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) will come to an end.

Across the United States, university and high school students marched out of buildings following the White House announcement. Under DACA, established by an executive order from former President Barack Obama, young undocumented immigrants who qualified received a renewable two-year reprieve from deportation, along with the right to work. But DACA has been a source of ire for President Donald Trump, whose administration has taken a hardline stance on immigration.

As of Tuesday, the nearly 800,000 people currently covered by DACA are now at risk of deportation once the administration's imposed six-month delay runs out.

Those impacted by the rollback are, by definition, young people who have spent a large portion of their lives in the United States. That reality isn't lost on students. By Tuesday afternoon, many were staging walk-outs in support of fellow classmates, friends, family members, and, in a number of cases, themselves.

In Boulder, Colorado, students demonstrated loudly as they exited the school building. "The diverse group of #Boulder High students all seem to know students with #DACA," wrote journalist Elizabeth Hernandez on Twitter, describing the varied group assembled.

Some went on to neighboring Denver, where hundreds of students marched soon after the decision was announced, shouting, "No justice, no peace, immigrants are here to stay!"

Denver students on their way to meet up with another school that's walked out
against [#DACA](#) repeal!
pic.twitter.com/5RYbsRF2FU

— Chris Smith (@Lilyachtty) [September 5, 2017](#)

Many of those students walked for miles to protest the decision, which will hit the state hard — approximately 17,000 Colorado residents will be impacted.

"No matter how hard we work, there always seems to be another barrier," said Karla Nino, 17, who has been in Colorado for 15 years.



17 y.o. senior Karla Nino has been in CO since she was two years old. "No matter how hard we work there always seems to be another barrier"

Similar scenes played out in other cities, including Chicago, Illinois, where a walk-out was organized at Loyola University. Protests were especially vibrant in border states, where undocumented communities are more populous — and arguably more vulnerable. At South Mountain High School in Phoenix, Arizona, students walked with backpacks calling out, "Whose streets? Our streets!" while waving water bottles in the air.

Students at South Mountain High School stage a walkout to defend in the state, students at Tucson High School were reportedly stopped from walking out by a school-wide lockdown, which some argued was intentional. (Those claims remain unconfirmed.)

Across the border, students at Rio Grande High School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, were more successful in their efforts. Protesters marched in support of the state's approximately 8,000 DACA recipients, or DREAMers, nicknamed for the long-floated DREAM Act, which would create a path to citizenship for young undocumented immigrants but has never passed. They joined hundreds of students across the city, from other high schools as well as from the University of New Mexico and Central New Mexico Community College.

Adding to the growing chorus of voices, a number of colleges and universities also issued formal support for DREAMers.

“At UT, we are defined and elevated by our students,” wrote Greg Fenves, president of the University of Texas at Austin. “Longhorn Dreamers are vital members of our campus community.”

“[E]nding the DACA program will undermine IU’s ability to educate our students to prepare them for a lifetime of informed and active global citizenship,” echoed Indiana University President Michael A. McRobbie in a statement. “Nevertheless, we remain strongly committed to creating a supportive and welcoming environment for students from all backgrounds and from all parts of the globe.” A number of other institutions, including Smith College, Ohio State University, and the University of Florida, issued similar statements.

While many protests were predominately student-led, some saw more varied crowds. Large-scale demonstrations led by a range of organizations and activists played out on the East Coast, where many yelled and beat drums as they gathered.

“We want education, down with deportation!” a large crowd chanted in Washington, D.C. In New York City, protesters blocked traffic on Fifth Avenue, which is located near Trump Tower. After refusing to move, many were ultimately arrested, including several DREAMers. One, Erika Andiola, 30, who has been in the United States since she was 10 years old, said she was ready for a fight.

“Trump is trying to scare us into hiding, to get us to back down,” she said, according to the Washington Post. “We’re not going to back down.”