



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: Representative Shae Sortwell, Chair
Members, Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform

FROM: Tia Izzia, Associate Director for Human Life & Social Concerns

DATE: December 13, 2023

RE: Support for Assembly Bill 822 Occupational Credentials for DACA Recipients

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC), the public policy voice of the Catholic bishops of Wisconsin, urges you to support Assembly Bill 822, allowing recipients of deferred action under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to obtain occupational licenses in Wisconsin.

AB-822 extends vital work opportunities to individuals who are DACA recipients. DACA recipients entered the United States as children and know America as their only home. DACA recipients are our family members and neighbors. They are some of the most thoroughly vetted individuals in the state, yet due to their DACA status are denied opportunities to enter into licensed careers that will benefit them and our state. This bill is a common-sense solution to solve such issues.

As a Church, we believe in protecting the dignity of every human being, as we are each created in God's image. The Catholic Church has long advocated for the legal protection, full inclusion, and wellbeing of children brought to the United States. Indeed, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops helped to formulate the first versions of the DREAM Act in 2000 and 2001.¹

The Catholic Bishops have long supported these immigrant youth and their families who are contributors to our economy, academic standouts in our universities, and leaders in our parishes. These youth have grown up in our country, some even choosing to put their lives on the line to serve in our armed forces. They truly exemplify the extraordinary contributions that immigrants can provide to our nation. It is both our moral duty and, in our nation's best interest to protect these youth and allow them to reach their God-given potential.²

We commend the authors for bringing this bill forward not just because of its benefits to DACA recipients and our state, but also because this bill demonstrates what can be accomplished through thoughtful bipartisan collaboration. We thank you for hearing this bill today and respectfully urge you to support it.

¹ Most Rev. Mario Eduardo Dorsonville-Rodríguez, USCCB Committee on Migration, *Written Testimony for a Hearing of the House Committee on the Judiciary*, 2019, [justiceformigrants.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Dream_TPS-Testimony-Updated-3.4.19-FINAL.pdf](https://www.justiceformigrants.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Dream_TPS-Testimony-Updated-3.4.19-FINAL.pdf).

² Most Rev. Joe S. Vásquez, Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration, *USCCB Letter of Support for the DREAM Act of 2019*, 2019, [justiceformigrants.org/statements/usccb-letter-of-support-for-the-dream-act-of-2019](https://www.justiceformigrants.org/statements/usccb-letter-of-support-for-the-dream-act-of-2019).