



The Daily Dish

DACA for the Holidays?

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Eakinomics: DACA for the Holidays?

Senators Lindsey Graham and Richard Durbin are [indicating](#) that they are hopeful about passing DACA-related legislation by the end of the year. Recall that former President Obama instituted the Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, which asked those eligible to come forward and register in exchange for the promise to not prosecute their violation of immigration laws. Faced with the evidence that this was pure [executive overreach](#) that the courts would overturn, President Trump announced that DACA would be phased out over a 6-month period.

That clock is ticking and it is important to get legislative resolution because the alternative is to simply deport the DACA-eligible population. That's undesirable for a number of reasons. Among them, AAF's Ben Gitis [pegs](#) the total cost of ICE agents deporting all the potential DACA participants at about \$50 billion, and the economic cost as a loss of about 1 percent of real gross domestic product, or \$175 billion (in 2020).

The major issue is that a DACA fix is unlikely to pass as a standalone proposition. The Trump Administration would broaden the bill to include the border wall and [faux comprehensive reform](#) like the RAISE Act. Congressional Republican preferences for potential add-ons range from enhanced security measures to a comprehensive reform package. The problem with the latter, of course, is that it has not come close to passing the Congress in previous attempts.

So the clock ticks as Congress tries to identify the correct scope and composition of a DACA-plus fix. The stakes are high and time is short.