

Trump Administration Sued by 15 States Over Ending DACA



New York, September 8 (RHC)-- Fifteen states and the District of Columbia have sued the U.S. government to block President Donald Trump's plan to end a program that gives young immigrants protection from deportation and access to work permits.

Chanting "Education, not Deportation" and holding signs that said "Here to Stay", dozens of Dreamers gathered in Seattle and New York as attorneys general of New York and Washington announced the lawsuit against the Trump administration.

"The consequence of the president's animus-driven decision is that approximately 800,000 persons who have availed themselves of the program will ultimately lose its protections" and be exposed to deportation, the lawsuit stated.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced on Tuesday that the Obama-era program known as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, will end in six months to give Congress time to find a legislative solution for the so-called dreamers, most of whom brought to the US illegally as children or came with families who overstayed visas. Those already enrolled in DACA remain covered until their permits expire, and if their permits expire before March 5, 2018, they are eligible to renew them for another two years as long as they apply by October 5. But the program will not accept new applications.

"Ending DACA, whose participants are mostly of Mexican origin, is a culmination of President's Trump's oft-stated commitments -- whether personally held, stated to appease some portion of his constituency, or some combination thereof -- to punish and disparage people with Mexican roots," read the lawsuit filed in federal court in the Eastern District of New York.

The lawsuit's plaintiffs were the states of New York, Massachusetts, Washington, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia.

California -- the state with the highest number of dreamers -- was noticeably absent. Xavier Becerra, the attorney general of California said on Tuesday he was preparing a separate lawsuit because a quarter of DACA recipients are California residents.

Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson said in Seattle on Wednesday that the action violates the due process rights of the immigrants. "It's outrageous, it's not right... As attorney general for the state of Washington, I have a hammer, it's the law." He added that Trump's decision to end DACA was "cruel and unlawful."

Ferguson said the 15-state lawsuit argued that targeting such people "shows racial animus," adding, "Sessions says DACA is illegal. There's just one problem: no court has ever ruled that is the case... We've had months of assertions that DACA is legal and the federal government cannot just, overnight, claim the opposite."

"They rescinded that first travel ban," he said. "We won, plain and simple. When it comes to Dreamers, our country is going to deport you to a country you may not even know. What could be more cruel than that?"

Ferguson sued Trump earlier this year over the initial travel ban, which resulted in a federal judge blocking its nationwide enforcement.

Washington Governor Jay Inslee, who joined Ferguson at the news conference to announce the lawsuit, blamed "the president's malicious bigotry" for the decision, saying that "this is one more of a long train of abuses that this president has attempted to foist on this great nation."

He said Trump's decision would "stifle the dreams of some of the most vibrant people in our community." "This is being met with a wave of revulsion," Inslee said.

Almost 800,000 Dreamers live in the U.S., 70 percent of them having arrived as children from Mexico with 90 percent having been born in Latin America.

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