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JSRI Perspectives on FAITH DOING JUSTICE

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Update on DACA and a Loyola Dreamer's Concerns

By Dr. Sue Weishar

JSRI Future Activities

September 20

JSRI is co-hosting an Ignatian Teach-In on Migration at Loyola University.

October 6

Fr. Kammer will lead a workshop for spiritual directors on social justice and the *Spiritual Exercises* at the Archdiocesan Spirituality Center.

JSRI Recent Activities

August 23

Dr. Sue Weishar attended a meeting of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference's Criminal Justice Reform Committee at Catholic Charities Diocese of Baton Rouge.

August 27

Dr. Weishar organized a meeting of immigrant advocates with Senator Bill Cassidy's Southeast Regional Director at the Senator's Metairie office.

August 28

Late in his first term President Barack Obama took action to prevent the deportation of young immigrants who had entered the U.S. as children--persons often referred to as "Dreamers." [1] On June 12, 2012, he announced the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program which allows undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. under the age of 16 and have continuously resided in the U.S. since June 15, 2007, to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action (temporary relief) from deportation and eligibility for a work permit if they pass a background check and meet certain educational requirements. [2]



Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice Advocacy Day Public Witness courtesy of Ignatian Solidarity Network.

Despite the [positive impact the program has had on the lives of over 800,000 DACA recipients and the economy](#), a year ago last week the Trump Administration announced plans to terminate DACA, setting off a [slew of lawsuits](#)

Dr. Sue Weishar spoke on the history of racism in U.S. immigration policies for a panel discussion organized by the Diocese of Baton Rouge's Racial Harmony Commission.

August 30

Fr. Kammer celebrated the Eucharist and preached at the tenth anniversary observance of the founding of Cristo Rey Jesuit College Prep in Houston.

September 8

Dr. Nicholas Mitchell spoke on the Unanimous Jury Coalition's amendment vote at the Gillepsie Memorial Community Breakfast.

September 11-19

Dr. Sue Weishar helped organize and lead a Novena for Migrant Families, held at the corner of St. Charles Avenue and Calhoun Street.

September 17

Fr. Kammer participated as vice-chair at the Jesuit Volunteer Corps board meeting.

September 18

Fr. Kammer was the opening speaker for the Statewide Staff Training Conference of Legal Services Alabama in Montgomery.

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to stop the government from doing so. Fortunately, much of the litigation has been successful; however, a lawsuit filed in May by Attorneys General of seven states, including Louisiana, had the potential to upend everything.

In a surprising move, on August 31, Judge Andrew Hanen of the Southern District of Texas, the same judge that nixed President Obama's effort to expand DACA and provide temporary relief from deportation to the parents of U.S. citizen children, ruled that the states had waited too long to file their challenge and refused to issue an injunction. He then prevented, at least temporarily, the termination of DACA. In his opinion, however, Judge Hanen strongly agreed with the states' arguments that DACA was unlawful, an indication that when he eventually rules on the merits of the case he will decide in favor of ending DACA. The conflicting judicial decisions on DACA might then require that the Supreme Court weighs in, which experts consider unlikely before spring 2019.

A Loyola Dreamer recently told me that the fear and uncertainty over DACA and the lack of progress in Congress to pass legislation to legalize the status of Dreamers have taken a tremendous emotional toll on her and many other young immigrants. This has resulted in symptoms for some Dreamers akin to post traumatic stress disorder. In a September 10 email, she added, "It is inhumane and unjust that Dreamers' lives have been inflicted with unnecessary pain. Dreamers who were educated with American ideals of justice, equality, and fairness have a hard time coping with the fact that our government has not reformed the immigration system and created a path to U.S. citizenship."

When asked what the Loyola community could do to support her and other Dreamers, this was her response: "Be informed and get involved in calling your senators and representatives; speak up in your communities against the deportation of Dreamers; and exercise your power to vote in local, state, and national elections. However, if I were to choose only one thing you could do for Dreamers, it would be for the Loyola community and allies to vote; our democracy needs your civic participation. Dreamers need you to vote."

The midterm elections are Tuesday, November 6. Are you registered to vote? The [deadline to register online to vote in Louisiana](#) for that election is October 16. Let's not waste the opportunity to exercise such a fundamental right of members of a democracy, a right that for many young immigrants who grew up in the U.S. still remains an elusive dream.

[1] The word Dreamer is derived from the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act (S. 1291) legislation introduced in 2001 as a bipartisan bill in the Senate that failed to pass.

[2] Other requirements for DACA applicants include the following: Must be under age 31 on June 15, 2012; entered the U.S. without inspection or fell out of lawful status before June 15, 2012; are currently in high school, have graduated from high school, have obtained a GED, or have been honorably discharged from the armed forces; have not been convicted of a felony offense, a significant misdemeanor, or more than three misdemeanors of any kind; and do not pose a threat to public safety. See <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/consideration-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca#guidelines>

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