AILA Chicago Welcomes Reintroduction of Bipartisan Bill to Protect DREAMers

Chicago, IL – The Chicago Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) celebrates the reintroduction of the “Bar Removal of Immigrants who Dream and Grow the Economy” or BRIDGE Act, a bipartisan bill, in the U.S. Senate on January 12, 2017. AILA Chicago specifically thanks Senator Dick Durkin (D) for his leadership in the Senate as well as U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D) and U.S. Rep. Mike Coffman (R) for introducing companion legislation in the House of Representatives. AILA welcomes the bill’s bipartisan support in both the House of Representatives and U.S. Senate.

Michael Jarecki, Vice-Chair of the Chicago Chapter of AILA stated “The BRIDGE Act will protect the investment American communities have made in educating DREAMers, immigrants who were brought to the United States as children and who have benefitted from President Obama’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) initiative. Since DACA’s inception, over 700,000 DREAMers have come forward and in turn have pursued higher education and careers. These are productive, taxpaying members of our society, and this bill will ensure they remain so.”

The BRIDGE Act would provide DACA-eligible individuals the chance to apply for “provisional protected presence,” which is temporary protection from deportation, similar to that provided by DACA. Employment authorization would be granted after recipients pay a fee and pass stringent background checks. While this legislation is lauded, the BRIDGE Act does not provide a solution for the millions of families and individuals who have lived in the U.S. for years, working and contributing to our economy, and who still do not have a way to legalize their statuses and step out of the shadows.

Mr. Jarecki stated “We sincerely hope President-elect Trump will continue to signal his support to find a viable solution to protect DACA recipients from deportation. Studies have shown that revoking DACA for the hundreds of thousands of current grantees would cost America more than $430 billion over ten years and an annual loss of over $2 billion to the state of Illinois. DACA enjoys widespread support in the business, higher education, and religious communities, and is supported by the vast majority of Americans.”

The American Immigration Lawyers Association is the national association of immigration lawyers established to promote justice, advocate for fair and reasonable immigration law and policy, advance the quality of immigration and nationality law and practice, and enhance the professional development of its members.