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CENTRAL AMERICAN RESOURCE CENTER / CENTRO DE RECURSOS CENTROAMERICANOS

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CARECEN: TEXAS LAWSUIT IS A REACTIONARY TANTRUM THAT SEPARATES FAMILIES, KEEPS IMMIGRANTS IN THE SHADOWS

(May 19, 2015, Los Angeles) – On this 180th day since President Obama announced administrative relief measures to protect millions from deportation, CARECEN Los Angeles calls for an end to *Texas v. United States*, the reactionary tantrum that cynically attempts to block those programs, and announces its preparations for administrative relief.

“This lawsuit has never been anything more than a cynical attempt to scare immigrants and separate families, and we believe it needs to stop now,” said Martha Arévalo, Executive Director for CARECEN Los Angeles. “In the meantime, CARECEN continues to prepare for the work ahead, work that will be waiting for us once this lawsuit is history.”

But for this lawsuit, which a Federal judge in Brownsville sanctioned in February, 5 million undocumented parents and young people could have begun today to come out of the shadows. But for this lawsuit, young people now under DACA could have extended their protections one more year, so they could focus on studying and contributing, not just on staying and surviving. But for this lawsuit, thousands of families might remain together without fear of deportation and fully join this country’s economy.

President Obama’s current Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which is not challenged under this lawsuit, grants protection from deportation and work permits to young people without status who arrived in the United States as children. The new Deferred Action for Parental Accountability (DAPA), announced last November, extended similar protections to parents of U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents. The extension of DACA also removed an upper age limit to receive DACA protection and extended work permits from two to three years.

An estimated 5 million people could benefit from DAPA and the DACA extension, while about half a million have received protection under DACA since it began in August 2012. CARECEN believes *Texas v. United States* delays the economic boost that DACA/DAPA could bring to states, including a \$904 million increase in tax revenues for California from an estimated 1,214,000 newly legalized workers.

CARECEN has continued to prepare for the launch of DAPA and the DACA extension through, among other things, its work in various coalitions to train community organizations to help identify potential applicants for DAPA and DACA extension, to steer them to legitimate legal services, and to report fraudulent immigration providers. CARECEN has also teamed with local law enforcement to find, prosecute and ultimately reduce the number of these providers in Los Angeles County.





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“Combating fraudulent immigration services providers, and helping their victims, is a huge component of delivering the promise of DAPA and the DACA extension,” said Erika Pinheiro, a CARECEN attorney in charge of the organization’s DAPA/DACA strategy. “People have to be able to trust the agencies and providers whose help they are seeking.”

CARECEN also continues to conduct individual consultations with likely DAPA applicants to judge whether they might comply with the program’s requirements. Between 20 and 30 percent of those possible applicants qualify for immigration relief from another program, and CARECEN helps them to apply for it. We also continue to process first-time applications and renewals under the original DACA program, which has not been challenged by the lawsuit. Also, mobile DAPA/DACA extension teams stand ready now to partner with local organizations to provide legal services to underserved populations through forums and legal clinics.

CARECEN has worked for more than 31 years to protect the rights and dignity of Central American and Latino immigrants in Southern California. Since its founding in 1983, when thousands of Central Americans were fleeing the brutality of civil war, CARECEN has worked to change unjust immigration policies, win legal status for immigrants, and foster community activism on issues such as education reform, workers and immigrant rights, economic justice and community strengthening.

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