

YWCA USA Bi-Weekly Policy Update

September 15, 2017

Congress is back from recess and events have picked up quickly with the administration announcement regarding the rescinding of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and a deal struck between President Trump and House and Senate Democrats on the debt ceiling, the FY '18 budget and Hurricane Harvey relief, all in the first week back. This policy update provides summaries of these activities, as well as other recent events relevant to YWCA's mission and work.

Join YWCA USA for National Voter Registration Day on September 26!

This November, local elections for county commissions, school boards, mayors, judges, bond issues, and more will take place in all 50 states. Powerful change can happen at the local level, and these elections have major impacts on people's day-to-day lives. We need your help to ensure that the women, girls, and the communities we serve are registered and empowered to vote!

We invite you to [join](#) YWCAs across the country and 1,800 community partners for [National Voter Registration Day](#). Every year millions of Americans find themselves unable to vote because they miss a registration deadline, don't update their registration, or aren't sure how to register. National Voter Registration Day wants to make sure everyone has the opportunity to vote. As YWCAs, we are uniquely positioned to ensure the most disenfranchised populations are able to participate fully in this political process. If you are interested in being a partner for National Voter Registration Day, please fill out this form [here](#).

As you prepare for November here are a few tools to support your work:

- YWCA [Get Out the Vote Toolkit](#)
- NVRD [Communications Toolkit](#)

Trump Administration Rescinds the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) Program

Attorney General Jeff Sessions, on behalf of the Trump Administration, announced the end of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. DACA is a program created through executive order by President Obama in 2012 to allow young undocumented immigrants who were brought to this country as children, commonly known as DREAMers, to live in the country for a renewable two-year period. During this period, DREAMers are protected from deportation, and eligible for a work permit. To date, over 800,000 individuals have been protected by the program.

The immigrant youth and pro-DACA community is urging Congress to pass a clean, bipartisan, bicameral version of the [Dream Act](#) immediately, which would give DREAMers the chance to become full, legal U.S. citizens. While other bills have been floated as options for protecting DREAMers, the community feels that the DREAM Act is the only legislation that guarantees DREAMers the ability to stay permanently in the United States.

YWCA USA views the ending of DACA as racial profiling, xenophobia, and bad policy that disproportionately harms communities of color. Following the announcement, YWCA USA issued a [statement](#) and a [policy](#)

[update](#) complete with resources in support of DREAMers and DACA recipients. [TAKE ACTION to defend DREAMers today!](#)

Congress Passes Debt Ceiling, Hurricane Harvey Relief, FY '18 Continuing Resolution Legislative Package

During their first week back from August recess, both the House (316-90) and Senate (80-17) easily passed a package that provides \$15 billion in disaster relief for victims of Hurricane Harvey, raises the debt ceiling through December 8, and funds the government through December 15th, at current funding levels, thereby avoiding a government shutdown at the end of September. The package passed both houses easily, after a deal was struck by President Trump and Democrats earlier in the week.

September was expected to be an incredibly busy month for Congress with multiple “must pass” pieces of legislation and very hard deadlines, however, the quick agreement and swift passage of this legislation has eased the workload for the month. Still of major importance is the Dream Act, noted above, and an extension to the Children’s Health Insurance Program, which expires on September 30th.

[House sends Harvey aid package to Trump with debt ceiling boost](#) [Politico]

[Trump sides with Democrats in debt limit, funding, Harvey deal](#) [Politico]

Healthcare Update

On September 13, two new healthcare bills were introduced in the Senate. First, Senators Graham (R-SC) and Cassidy (R-LA) introduced the newest [attempt](#) to repeal the Affordable Care Act. The legislation, which has been drafted in the form of an amendment to the House-passed American Health Care Act, would repeal the individual and employer mandates, as well as the medical device tax; allow states to waive certain ACA regulations; and provide states with block grants instead of tax credits. It appears unlikely that the Senate will rally around this legislation for passage, however, we must remain vigilant in our protection of the ACA. Following the introduction, YWCA USA released [a statement](#) in opposition to the legislation.

Secondly, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), with multiple of his Democratic colleagues, introduced the Medicare for All Act that would expand Medicare into a universal public health insurance program that would be paid for by higher taxes. The legislative language has just been released and the Public Policy and Advocacy team is currently reviewing it and will update the network regarding our position.

[Graham, Cassidy unveil last-ditch Obamacare repeal bill](#) [Politico]

[Sanders introduces universal health care, backed by 15 Democrats](#) [Washington Post]

Anti-Immigrant Legislation Passes the House

On September 14, the House passed [H.R. 3697](#), the “Criminal Alien Gang Act,” fast-tracked legislation would create new, vague, and overly broad grounds of removability based on a sweeping new definition of “criminal gang,” triggering racial profiling and putting the United States in violation of its international obligations to protect asylum seekers. This bill is in line with the administration’s efforts to increase deportation. The bill was introduced by Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-VA) on September 7, 2017, has only 6 co-sponsors, and was not considered by the committee of jurisdiction prior to moving to the House floor. It

is unlikely that the Senate would take up such a controversial bill, however, immigration continues to be a hot topic in Congress. YWCA USA has formally opposed this legislation.

[House votes to crack down on undocumented immigrants with gang ties](#) [The Hill]

Betsy DeVos Announces Plan to Overhaul Title IX Rule

On September 7, Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos announced that the Department of Education would be “rethinking” the Obama-era Title IX directive that provided a roadmap for schools on how to handle sexual assault investigations and hearings. During her remarks, she claimed that the current process was a “failed system” and she would be launching a notice-and-comment process to better incorporate the feedback of all parties. In response to Secretary DeVos’ speech, YWCA USA issued a [statement](#) condemning Mrs. DeVos’ problematic remarks and expressing concern about potentially rolling back protections for survivors of sexual assault.

[DeVos announces review of Obama-era sexual assault guidance](#) [CNN]

[Betsy DeVos Says the Title IX System Has ‘Failed’ Both Survivors and the Accused](#) [Huffington Post]

Trump Administration Suspends Obama-Era Rule in the Housing Choice Voucher Program

In August, the Housing and Urban Development Department issued a [letter](#) to public housing agencies (PHAs) in 23 metropolitan areas, suspending the 2016 “Small Area Fair Market Rent (SAFMR)” rule that would allow more families in the Housing Choice Voucher program to move to lower poverty neighborhoods. The letter stated that the SAFMR rule would be delayed by at least two years (to 2019), instead of this September, as originally planned. The original intent of the rule was to base housing subsidies on rents in zip codes in the metro areas with the highest rates of voucher concentration. The Poverty & Race Research Action Council (PRRAC), the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NIHLC) and others in the housing community are in the early stages of conversation and information gathering around this new development. PRRAC will be gathering data on voucher concentration in each of the 23 impacted metro areas and preparing talking points on the issue for partners to use. Additionally, PRRAC, NIHLC, and the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities are looking at challenging the suspension in the courts. YWCA USA is working closely with our partners in the housing community and will share further information, resources, and action items as they become available.

[Commentary: Trump Administration Should Reinstate Promising Housing Voucher Initiative](#) [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities]

[Trump Administration Suspends Key Civil Rights Provision in the Housing Choice Voucher Program](#) [Poverty & Race Research Action Council Press Release]

YWCA USA Letters to Members of Congress

Please see below for letters from YWCA USA to legislators in our recent policy work.

September 2017

- [YWCA USA Letter to Congress Urging Passage of the Dream Act](#)

- [YWCA USA Letter to Senators Opposing Eric Dreiband for Assistant Attorney General of the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division](#)

YWCA USA Signs on to Letters on Mission Related Issues

Over the past month, YWCA USA has signed on to the following [coalition letters](#):

August 2017

[National Center for Transgender Equality Letter Re: HUD Equal Access Rule \(8/10\)](#)

Urging Secretary Carson to reject any proposal to repeal or weaken any fundamental guarantees of fairness guaranteed by HUD's Equal Access Rule.

[CAP Letter – We Are With The Dreamers \(8/3\)](#)

Expressing support for DACA recipients and urging Congress and the Administration to preserve DACA.

July 2017

[LCCHR Letter Re: Motion To Proceed on the Better Care Reconciliation Act \(7/24\)](#)

Asking senators to oppose the motion to proceed on the BCRA and to support the parliamentarian's ruling excluding the defunding of Planned Parenthood.

[Futures Without Violence Letter In Support of Children Exposed To Violence Initiative \(7/24\)](#)

Thanking Senator Durbin for co-authoring the Trauma-Informed Care for Children and Families Act, and asking him to support the inclusion of the Children Exposed to Violence Initiative in the FY '18 Commerce-Justice –Science appropriations bill.

[ABA LSC Letter \(7/20\)](#)

Urging appropriators not to cut funding for the Legal Services Corporation

[AAUW Letter re: Candice Jackson \(7/20\)](#)

Urging Ms. Jackson to publicly reject the false statistics that she shared, pledge that the Office for Civil Rights will not promote rape myths, and travel with Secretary DeVos to meet with student survivors.

[LCCHR Letter re: Eric Dreiband nomination \(7/20\)](#)

Urging senators to vote against Mr. Dreiband's confirmation.

The most up-to-date version of this list can always be found on the [Coalition Sign-On Letters page](#) on the intranet.

Upcoming Webinars

Join YWCA for the following Public Policy and Advocacy Webinar!

Wednesday, September 27 at 3:00PM ET/12:00PM PT- [September YWCA Monthly Policy Update Webinar](#)

Sign up to receive YWCA USA Action Alerts

[Sign up](#) here to make sure you receive all the latest calls to action on pressing public policy issues.

Curious about legislation supported or opposed by YWCA USA?

**YWCA IS ON
A MISSION**

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca

Check out YWCA USA's [key legislation](#) on our action center!

Don't Forget to Act!

Please see the Action Alerts in YWCA USA's [Action Center](#) to encourage your legislators on our policy priorities!

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