



To: Members of the House Committee on Human Services

From: State Representative Maxine Dexter, M.D., House District 33

Date: February 1, 2022

Subject: HB 4122

Chair Williams, Vice-Chairs Scharf and Ruiz, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Dr. Maxine Dexter, State Representative for House District 33, encompassing NW Portland and NE Washington County on the indigenous lands of the Cowlitz, Clackamas, and Grand Ronde. I am grateful for this opportunity today to request your full support for HB 4122, the Dreamers Belong Act.

DACA recipients in Oregon (and nationwide) currently face a number of economic and social barriers that other documented members of our community do not have to consider. Some of these are financial (lack of access to federal funds like federal student aid¹), or inability to sustain a career due to unstable work permits, while others are emotional (threatened personal security to their undocumented family members at all times due to their legal status). These limitations create enormous hurdles that I personally have seen close family friends as well as patients struggle with. The resilience of spirit and optimism that I have witnessed, the confidence that living and working in the United States as an unprotected member of the community, despite these barriers, is worthy of such enormous sacrifice and risk, is inspiring. Waiving an expensive fee in the face of such strength is frankly the very least we can do.

As is recognized in healthcare and social service sectors, the health of our communities depends far more on people's access to things like education, housing and food than it does on our healthcare system². Due to the challenges many DACA recipients face, they may have to make an impossible choice

¹ Office of Student Access and Completion, Higher Education Coordinating Commission, 2022.

² Atriga, S. & Hinton, E. "Beyond Health Care: The Role of Social Determinants in Promoting Health and Health Equity," from *Kaiser Family Foundation*, <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/beyond-health-care-the-role-of-social-determinants-in-promoting-health-and-health-equity/>

between providing necessities for their family or paying a fee to retain their legal status. Currently, DACA recipients have to pay \$495 every two years to retain their legal status. HB 4122 will ensure that DACA recipients can access a grant from the Department of Human Services to help cover this cost.

The Dreamers in our community are people who are contributing to our community in positive ways. Assisting them to maintain these contributions is going to improve their access to services while supporting the community as a whole. Please give your strong support to HB 4122.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maxine Dexter', written in a cursive style.

Representative Maxine Dexter, M.D.
House District 33 (NW Portland and NE Washington County)