



How to write an Op-ed

Thank you for your willingness to share your personal Dreamer story via an op-ed. This is a powerful way to tell others why the Deferred Action program is so important for your family and for the economic well-being of the United States.

DACA is currently at risk of being eliminated, which would have immediate and serious consequences for communities across the country. It would put roughly 800,000 hardworking young Dreamers at immediate risk of deportation from the only country they consider home.

Below we have included a suggested outline to help you frame your narrative, as well as some broad guidelines on word count, target publications and key questions to consider answering in your op-ed.

Here are some resources to help you localize your story:

- [State-by-state DACA fact sheets showing number of Dreamers, economic impact, etc.](#)
- [State-by-state data showing the economic impact of a DACA repeal](#)
- [DACA FAQ on InformedImmigrant.com \[updated August 2017\]](#)
- [Attorney General Letter to Trump in support of DACA](#)

NOTE: We are here to support you if you need help drafting the op-ed, identifying a target publication or pitching the op-ed to a certain media outlet. Please don't be afraid to ask!

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to Leezia Dhalla at leezia@fwd.us.

Thank you,

FWD.us Communications Team

Suggested Outline for pro-Dreamer op-ed

As you write your op-ed, we recommend you follow the suggested outline:

1. **Share your personal story.**
 - a. **If you are a Dreamer, draw upon your personal experience with DACA.** Sharing your authentic voice and your personal narrative will allow for readers to connect with you and DACA in a more personal and meaningful way.
 - b. **If you are an ally, detail your personal experience with a specific Dreamer, and illustrate the contributions they have made to the U.S.** Highlight how Dreamers are valuable members of our communities, and how their contributions have improved your life, as well as the social and economic well-being of the United States.

2. **Explain what the DACA program is, including the criteria and what DACA allows individuals to achieve.** DACA is a merit-based program that provides temporary deportation relief and a two-year renewable work permit to hardworking young people who came to the U.S. as children, if they can meet a certain criteria including registering with the government, passing a background check, getting fingerprinting, paying a fee and meeting certain educational, military and/or residency requirements.
 - a. DACA allows individuals to legally live, work and pay taxes in the United States.
 - b. Dreamers help create jobs, support the economy, contribute to their communities and work hard to achieve the American Dream.

3. **Explain the urgency around the threat to DACA.** Recently, a 10-state coalition sent a letter to President Trump, threatening to sue if he does not eliminate the DACA program by September 5. Repealing DACA would put roughly 800,000 Dreamers at immediate risk of deportation and strip their work authorization at a cost of \$433.4 billion in GDP loss over a decade.

4. **Make a call to action, and highlight the need for a permanent legislative solution.** Call on your Senators and Congressperson to support the bipartisan DREAM Act. Thank and give positive reinforcement to any elected officials who have affirmed support for Dreamers and the DREAM Act.

Guidelines: Writing an Op-Ed

1. **Purpose:** To raise awareness about, advocate for, or oppose circumstance surrounding DACA, immigration reform, and/or Dreamers.
2. **Length:** Word limit is typically between 500-700 words.
3. **Timeline:** It usually takes at least two weeks for an op-ed to be published, from the time it is pitched to an outlet.
4. **Before you write:** Local outlets that cover the community where you live, work and study are excellent places to publish an op-ed. After you identify a target outlet, research its editorial guidelines around op-eds, including word limits, audience and publication schedule.
 - a. Check out [The Washington Post Op-ed Submission Guidelines](#) as an example.
5. **News hook:** An outlet is more likely to run your piece if it is timely, relevant and/or directly linked to recent reporting that the paper has done. To ensure your op-ed is timely, link your personal story to a prominent news issue.
6. **Content:** Make sure your story is coherent, informative, and timely. Be sure to include specific examples and personal anecdotes in the piece; the voices of “real people” lend authenticity to your writing. Utilize statistics to back your case wherever possible.
 - a. **Introduction:** Your opening lays the foundation for your argument. Begin with an anecdote that illustrates your **personal** point of view. Suggested openers are: a strong claim, a surprising fact, a metaphor, a mystery, or a counter-intuitive observation that entices the reader into reading more.
 - b. **Body: Answer the following**
 - i. Do I have a clear point to make?
 - ii. What is it?
 - iii. Why will this message resonate with my audience? (Who are you trying to convince? Why is it important for your audience to support your message?)
 - iv. Is there substance to my argument? What specific facts and anecdotes support my claims? Use data points and real-life examples to illustrate why your claim is correct.
 - c. **Conclusion:** Finish strong, and connect back to your thesis. An effective conclusion echoes the introduction and calls the reader to take specific, actionable steps.
7. **Call to action:** Include a clear call to action - what do you want your readers to do after reading your piece? E.g. contact your member of Congress and ask them to co-sponsor the DREAM Act, reflect on their family’s immigrant journey, or engage directly with elected officials at a certain event.

8. **Headline:** Always recommend a headline to accompany your article rather than allowing editors to choose a headline for you.
9. **Examples:**
 - a. Las Vegas Review-Journal // Cheska Perez // [Commentary: Congress should extend program to help undocumented kids](#)
 - b. The Press-Enterprise // Don Peterson // [DACA is smart immigration policy](#)
 - c. The Hill // Rep. Nanette Diaz Barragan // [On the Five year anniversary of DACA, let's put those in the program on a path to citizenship](#)
 - d. Waco Tribune-Herald // Kevin Brackmeyer // [Kevin Brackmeyer, guest columnist: Time to rally for 'Dreamers' for viable U.S. workforce, stronger society](#)
 - e. Arizona Capitol Times // Steven Zylstra // [Coalition fighting for 'dreamers,' immigration reform](#)

Example Op-Ed:

Red: Hook

Orange: Call to action

Purple: Thesis

Blue: Reiterate call to action

In recent days we have received three petitions — from faculty members, alums and graduate students — urging Brown to offer sanctuary to protect undocumented members of the Brown community from deportation. The first of these was published Monday in the The Herald (“Faculty, staff: Make Brown a sanctuary,” Nov. 14).

We join our faculty members, students and alums in expressing the feelings of deep empathy and desire to protect members of our community that have motivated these petitions. Many of the statements that the president-elect articulated during the campaign with regard to immigration and undocumented members of communities across the United States have prompted fear and anxiety.

Even before the recent election, Brown had taken concrete actions to increase support for undocumented students and students enrolled in the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. These measures have included providing increased guidance and support through a faculty advisor; offering services through the new **First-Generation College and Low-income Student Center**; and eliminating the distinction between domestic applicants and undocumented and DACA-status students in the **admission process** — continuing to meet 100 percent of these students’ demonstrated financial need at Brown.

Now, the potential risks to undocumented and DACA-status students are heightened, given possible changes in policy and practice that may come under the new administration. For example, President-Elect Donald Trump has stated that among his first actions as president would be to rescind many executive orders enacted by President Barack Obama’s administration, including the one that established the DACA program.

Though we do not know what specific changes may occur, Brown will continue to support members of our community to the fullest extent possible while complying with the law. This support includes not taking any actions that could place individual members of our community at risk of deportation.

In making a request for Brown to establish a sanctuary protocol, the signatories of the petitions have referenced a 2011 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement memo that contains a discussion of enforcement priorities of the current administration. The petitions suggest that Brown (and other universities and colleges) may have a special ability to prevent law enforcement officials from entering campus to enforce immigration policy.

Based on consultation with legal counsel, we have come to understand that private universities and colleges do not have such protection to offer legal sanctuary from members of law enforcement or Immigration and Customs Enforcement. While we wish we could offer absolute protection to members of our community who are threatened by possible changes in policy, it would be irresponsible to promise protections that we cannot legally deliver.

The University feels strongly that we must not take any action that would jeopardize the status of undocumented members of our community.

We care deeply about the welfare of our community members who are undocumented or hold DACA status and continue to provide them with as much information as we can make available regarding the law and potential outcomes if policies change under the new administration. In the days and weeks ahead, we will work with elected officials locally and nationally to understand any potential policy changes or legislative efforts, to advocate for maintaining the DACA Program and to promote policies that are fair and supportive of our students and their families.

We are bringing legal experts to campus to advise students, faculty members and staff members of their rights, responsibilities and potential options. And provided that DACA continues to be an option, we will assist current students in applying for DACA status or renewal if they choose (including providing financial assistance if needed), allowing them to pursue eligibility for a Social Security Number, a stay of deportation and work authorization.

Threats of deportation personally affect many individuals at Brown, their friends and families and — as a result — our entire campus. [We are fully dedicated to continuing to work with affected members of our community in the coming months to ensure their safety and security.](#)