



January 13, 2015

Dear Representative:

On behalf of SEIU's two million members, I urge you to vote against the Aderholt, Blackburn, DeSantis, Schock and Salmon amendments to H.R. 240, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2015, as well as any similar amendments intended to interfere with the President's existing authority under the law and the U.S. Constitution to set immigration enforcement priorities.

Congress's failure to enact common-sense immigration reform has left our immigration system in a shambles. Millions of individuals who came to this country years ago have worked hard, established deep roots here, and committed no crimes since their arrival. It makes no sense to divert homeland security resources to hunt down and deport such individuals—who pose no threat—when those same resources could be used to thwart terrorism and protect public safety.

The landmark immigration reforms announced by the President in November will transform the lives of millions of immigrants, and in the process make our nation a better place to live. Combined, they represent the most significant movement in a generation to address some of the shortcomings in our current system, including provisions that address the status of long-term resident undocumented immigrants who meet certain conditions, and steps to modernize the immigration system and better integrate immigrants into our national community.

The amendments to H.R. 240 would undo these reforms and effectively require the President to abandon priorities, sensible distinctions, and other improvements. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) would be forced to administer the immigration enforcement machinery blindly, without compassion and without consideration of the impact to our nation. Families would be broken apart, businesses disrupted, and the Administration would be left powerless to prevent removals that cause real hardship to U.S. citizens.

These amendments would also reduce the revenue generated from the affected immigrants, which the authors appear to recognize because they have conveniently exempted themselves from the PAYGO rules. The amendments would require DHS to forgo the fees from immigrants coming forward, and they would cost taxpayers billions of dollars in revenue that would have been paid by those granted work authorization—and their employers—as many of those workers emerge from the cash economy.

By passing any of these costly, unwise, and divisive amendments, the House would set up a dangerous and unnecessary confrontation with the Senate and the President that would threaten the continuous funding of DHS. Recent events remind us of the importance of this funding, and the serious consequences that can result if the House again plays politics instead of governing responsibly.

In addition to these general objections, SEIU offers the following specific reasons for opposing each of the following amendments:

MARY KAY HENRY  
International President

MICHAEL P. FISHMAN  
International Secretary-Treasurer

KIRK ADAMS  
Executive Vice President

GERRY HUDSON  
Executive Vice President

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- **Aderholt**: The Aderholt amendment would defund numerous DHS policies including the Administration's planned Deferred Action for Parental Accountability (DAPA) program and the expansion of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Defunding DACA expansion and DAPA would result in the removal of parents of U.S. citizens and individuals brought here as children who have been here for at least five years and can pass a criminal background check. The Aderholt amendment would also repeal 13 other administration policies that have been implemented over the past four years, which would intrude on executive authority and result in chaos and uncertainty.
- **Blackburn**: The Blackburn amendment would defund DACA renewals and new applications, thereby causing hundreds of thousands of young people brought to the United States as children (DREAMers) to become deportable the moment their current period of eligibility lapses. A vote for this amendment is a vote to deport some of our best and brightest, including nurses, teachers and social workers, just now coming of age and able to fully contribute.
- **DeSantis**: The DeSantis amendment would require DHS to treat anyone convicted of any domestic violence or certain other related crimes, no matter how minor or what the circumstances, as one of the highest immigration enforcement priorities alongside terrorists, murderers and rapists. Those affected would include victims of domestic violence who are sometimes convicted due to confusion or poor representation, as well as long-ago perpetrators who have been rehabilitated and are now responsibly supporting their families.
- **Salmon**: The Salmon amendment is a Sense of Congress protesting what it characterizes as "disparate treatment" of persons granted DACA and DAPA under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The amendment makes little sense given that the Administration has determined that these individuals—like undocumented immigrants—are ineligible for ACA subsidies or tax credits, and moreover they are not eligible to even participate in the exchange without any subsidy. The disparity therefore favors U.S. citizens and lawful residents who are eligible for this coverage, not DACA and DAPA recipients who are not.
- **Schock**: The Schock amendment is another Sense of Congress. It inaccurately describes the impact of programs such as DACA and DAPA as diverting DHS personnel who would otherwise be working on other immigration benefits. In fact, these programs are 100 percent paid by the fees they generate which are used to hire the needed additional personnel. There was an initial disruption when DACA was first implemented because the additional staff did not come online fast enough, but DAPA will have a longer lead time which should allow the Department to avoid even a short-term impact on others.

We urge you to oppose these amendments. Instead of attempting to frustrate the Administration's efforts to improve our broken immigration system, Congress should fulfill its own obligations and enact common-sense reform that adjusts the status of currently undocumented immigrants, protects workers, comports with America's values, and addresses the challenges and promises of today's economy. SEIU may add the votes on these or any similar amendments to our legislative scorecard located at [www.seiu.org](http://www.seiu.org). Please feel free to contact Josh Bernstein ([joshua.bernstein@seiu.org](mailto:joshua.bernstein@seiu.org)) if you have any questions or comments about these amendments.

Sincerely,



Steph Sterling  
Director of Legislation

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