

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Trump's Bid to End Young Immigrants' Protections is Blocked by Supreme Court

US / **Published On June 18, 2020 11:43 AM /**

Staff Consortium **June 18, 2020**



WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Thursday rejected President Donald Trump's effort to end legal protections for 650,000 young immigrants, a stunning rebuke to the president in the midst of his reelection campaign.

For now, those immigrants retain their protection from deportation and their authorization to work in the United States.

The 5-4 outcome, in which Chief Justice John Roberts and the four liberal justices were in the majority, seems certain to elevate the issue in Trump's campaign, given the anti-immigrant rhetoric of his first presidential run in 2016 and immigration restrictions his

administration has imposed since then. It was the second big liberal victory at the court this week, following Monday's ruling that it's illegal to fire people because they're gay or transgender.

The justices rejected administration arguments that the 8-year-old Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program is illegal and that courts have no role to play in reviewing the decision to end DACA.

Trump's first reaction came on Twitter, where he retweeted a comment incorporating a line from Justice Clarence Thomas' dissenting opinion in which Thomas called the ruling "an effort to avoid a politically controversial but legally correct decision."

Roberts wrote for the court that the administration did not pursue the end of the program properly.

"We do not decide whether DACA or its rescission are sound policies," Roberts wrote. "We address only whether the agency complied with the procedural requirement that it provide a reasoned explanation for its action. Here the agency failed to consider the conspicuous issues of whether to retain forbearance and what if anything to do about the hardship to DACA recipients."

The Department of Homeland Security can try again, he wrote. But any new order to end the program, and the legal challenge it would provoke, would take months, if not longer, immigration experts said.

The court's four conservative justices dissented. Justice Thomas, in a dissent joined by Justices Samuel Alito and Neil Gorsuch, wrote that DACA was illegal from the moment it was created under the Obama administration in 2012.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote in a separate dissent that he was satisfied that the administration acted appropriately in trying to end the program.

DACA recipients were elated by the ruling.

"We'll keep living our lives in the meantime," said Cesar Espinosa, who leads the Houston immigration advocacy group FIEL. "We're going to continue to work, continue to advocate."

Espinosa said he got little sleep overnight in anticipation of a possible decision Thursday. In the minutes since the decision was posted, he said his group was "flooded with calls with Dreamers, happy, with that hope that they're going to at least be in this country for a while longer."

From the Senate floor, the Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said of the DACA decision, "I cried tears of joy."

"Wow," he went on, choking up. "These kids, these families, I feel for them, and I think all of America does."

DACA covers people who have been in the United States since they were children and are in the country illegally. In some cases, they have no memory of any home other than

the U.S.

The program grew out of an impasse over a comprehensive immigration bill between Congress and the Obama administration in 2012. President Barack Obama decided to formally protect people from deportation while also allowing them to work legally in the U.S.

But Trump made tough talk on immigration a central part of his campaign and less than eight months after taking office, he announced in September 2017 that he would end DACA.

Immigrants, civil rights groups, universities and Democratic-led states quickly sued, and courts put the administration's plan on hold.

The Department of Homeland Security has continued to process two-year DACA renewals so that hundreds of thousands of DACA recipients have protections stretching beyond the election and even into 2022.

The Supreme Court fight over DACA played out in a kind of legal slow motion. The administration first wanted the justices to hear and decide the case by June 2018. The justices said no. The Justice Department returned to the court later in 2018, but the justices did nothing for more than seven months before agreeing a year ago to hear arguments. Those took place in November and more than seven months elapsed before the court's decision.

Thursday's ruling was the second time in two years that Roberts and the liberal justices faulted the administration for the way it went about a policy change. Last year, the court forced the administration to back off a citizenship question on the 2020 census.

Associated Press writers Jessica Gresko, Lisa Mascaro and Nomaan Merchant in Houston contributed to this report.