

Mitt Romney Camp Says He Will Not Continue Deferred Action After Taking Office

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If elected president, Mitt Romney would not continue the new program that grants work permits and suspends deportation for two years for undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as minors, his campaign says, according to the Boston Globe.

Romney would not revoke work permits for people who obtain them by the time he would take office, on Jan. 20, but he would not grant any after that, the campaign says, according to the Boston Globe report.

Critics of Romney's latest position on the initiative say it will doom the vast majority of the more than 1 million people who could be eligible for it. Since the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, USCIS, began accepting Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals applications on Aug. 15, only 29 people have been granted deferred action and work permits.

Romney's plan to discontinue the program – which was announced by the Obama administration in June – clarifies a statement he made in a Denver Post interview in which he was quoted as saying he would not revoke work permits issued under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, plan.

But his reported comments to the Colorado newspaper left unclear what exactly he planned to do with the program, whether he would keep aspects of it, and for how long. For those who qualify, DACA suspends deportation for two years – it could be renewed once that period expires.

Romney and others who favor a strict approach to illegal immigration denounced DACA as a stop-gap measure that failed to address problems with the immigration system. Many supporters of strict immigration enforcement assailed it as a form of “amnesty” that rewards lawbreakers.

But proponents of relief for undocumented immigrants who were brought as minors argue that they should not be punished for the actions of their parents and decisions in which, as children, they had no say. Many of these advocates want passage of the DREAM Act, a measure that would provide such undocumented immigrants a path to legal permanent residence and eventually citizenship.

The DREAM Act, however, has failed to pass in Congress.

Romney seemed to suggest to the Denver Post that DACA's future would not be his focus because “we will have the full immigration reform plan that I've proposed.”

“The people who have received the special visa that the president has put in place, which is a two-year visa, should expect that the visa would continue to be valid. I’m not going to take something that they’ve purchased,” Romney told The Denver Post in an interview published Tuesday. “Before those visas have expired we will have the full immigration reform plan that I’ve proposed.”

DACA actually does not involve a visa and does not grant legal status to those who qualify for the two-year relief from deportation.

Until the Denver Post interview, Romney had been vague about what he would do with DACA, saying in several interviews that he would put a permanent solution in place, but offering few details about what that would involve.

“Many observers interpreted the Romney comments to be evidence that the candidate was softening his hardline immigration stance in an attempt to appeal to Latino voters,” said a statement by America’s Voice, a Washington D.C.-based group that promotes more lenient immigration policies.

“Just when it looked as if Romney was reaching out to Latino voters by promising to protect young people who benefit under President Obama’s initiative,” said Frank Sharry, executive director of America’s Voice, in a statement, “now his campaign is promising to rip away the hopes and futures of more than a million young people who are American in all but paperwork.”

“Well, at least he finally came clean, and the choice is clearer than ever,” Sharry said. “A vote for Romney is a vote against the DREAMers.”

The Romney campaign has cast Obama as a failure on immigration, saying that he campaigned on a promise to reform the flawed immigration system, but that he did not fight to deliver on that pledge.

Obama, in turn, has blamed the lack of comprehensive immigration reform on Republicans, who he said have blocked attempts to address immigration.

Under the DACA plan, undocumented immigrants will be immune from deportation if they were brought to the United States before they turned 16 and are younger than 30, have been in the country for at least five continuous years, have no criminal history, complete – or are in the process of completing – high school or served in the military. They also can apply for a work permit that will be good for two years with no limits on how many times it can be renewed.

Romney has said he opposes the DREAM Act, though he says he supports giving some type of conditional legal status to undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as minors who commit to serving in the military.

Read more: <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/politics/2012/10/03/mitt-romney-campaign-says-would-not-continue-deferred-action-program-after/print#ixzz28u7c6ft0>