

Missouri House of Representatives

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State Rep. Ray Reed Calls for Passage of House Bill 811 to Address Workforce Shortages and Promote Opportunity

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – State Representative Ray Reed is urging the Missouri legislature to pass **House Bill 811**, a crucial measure that would address workforce shortages and promote equality by ensuring skilled Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients have equitable access to professional licensing. This legislation would enable these individuals to fully contribute to Missouri's economy and their communities. Rep. Reed issued the following statement:

“Celebrating a community that has given so much to our state—not just in the work that’s done in our hospitals, in our classrooms, in our small businesses, but in the culture, the traditions, the stories, and most of all, the people who make Missouri stronger, richer, and better.

What’s always inspired me about the Hispanic community is its incredible diversity—so many cultures, so many backgrounds, so many journeys that have led people here, each with their own struggles and triumphs, but all sharing that same deep belief in family, in faith, in service, in hard work, in the idea that if you do your part, you should have the opportunity to succeed. That’s what makes this country great. That’s what’s always made America a land of possibility.

Now, today, we stand at a crossroads. We can choose to accept things as they are, or we can choose to shape them as they should be. We can continue down the same path of outdated policies that stifle progress, or we can embrace a forward-thinking approach that reflects who we are today and who we aspire to be tomorrow.

That’s why I’m proud to be leading the fight for a simple but powerful idea: If you grow up here, if you work hard, if you’re ready to contribute, Missouri should let you. We should not be holding back young people—DACA recipients—who want to serve their communities as nurses, teachers, and skilled professionals. We should be doing everything we can to empower them, to recognize them for what they are: Americans in every way but on paper.

Because here's the thing—laws should reflect our values. They should reflect our aspirations, not just our history. And right now, too many of our laws are stuck in the past. But that's a choice. We don't have to keep clinging to old attitudes that no longer serve us. We don't have to accept policies that divide us when we could be choosing policies that bring us together.

So, I'm calling on my colleagues in the legislature—Democrats and Republicans—to step up. To do what's right. To embrace the future, not fear it. To recognize that when we invest in people, when we open doors instead of closing them, when we choose progress over stagnation, we all benefit. Pass House bill 811.

That's the kind of Missouri I believe in. That's the kind of America I believe in. And if we stand together, if we keep pushing forward, that's the kind of future we will build."

HB 811 represents a vital step toward a more inclusive and economically competitive Missouri. By allowing DACA recipients to obtain professional licenses, the state can address workforce shortages in critical sectors while affirming its commitment to opportunity and fairness.

Representative Ray Reed proudly serves as the State Representative for Missouri's 83rd House District, which includes vibrant communities across the St. Louis region, including Brentwood, Maplewood, Richmond Heights, Shrewsbury, and portions of Affton. He was elected to his first two-year term in November 2024. For more information, please contact Rep. Reed by phone at 573-751-2883 or email at Ray.Reed@House.Mo.Gov.

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