

Not betting on DACA deal

■ **President** uncertain on parties agreeing by Feb. 8

■ **Schumer** withdraws Friday offer on funds for wall

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WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump, a day after Congress reached an agreement to end a government shutdown and renew talks on a soon-to-expire immigration program, expressed uncertainty that a bipartisan compromise could be reached in the next three weeks to save the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

“Nobody knows for sure that the Republicans & Democrats will be able to reach a deal on DACA by February 8, but everyone will be trying . . . with a big additional focus put on Military Strength and Border Security,” Trump tweeted Tuesday morning, referring to the Obama-era program that provides legal cover to about 800,000 young immigrants living in the country illegally.

The president’s assessment came hours before Senate Democratic Minority Leader Chuck Schumer announced he had withdrawn his offer for federal



@RealDonaldTrump

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funding for the president’s proposed border wall in exchange for a deal to restore DACA. Schumer (D-N.Y.) initially made the offer to Trump last Friday in a lunchtime meeting at the White House aimed at averting a government shutdown. White House officials have said Trump rejected the offer.

“We’re going to have to start on a new basis and the wall offer is off the table,” Schumer told reporters on Tuesday.

Schumer’s move to rescind his offer for billions of dollars in border wall funding comes amid mounting criticism from members of his own party, liberal groups and immigration advocacy organizations for his urging Senate Democrats to vote Monday for a GOP-backed temporary spending bill to fund the government through Feb. 8, without forcing a vote on renewing DACA, which is set to expire March 5.

Schumer, in a Senate floor speech Tuesday, said he was still

hopeful Democrats and Republicans could hash out a deal to restore DACA — a program that 73 percent of Americans support, according to a Quinnipiac poll released last week.

“I am more hopeful today than last week that we can assemble 60 votes for a DACA bill in the Senate, and now we have a real pathway to get such a bill through the Senate,” Schumer said.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell also struck a hopeful tone, telling colleagues in a Senate floor speech, “because common sense and bipartisanship won out yesterday, we have a fresh start today.”

“Serious negotiations can resume on key issues such as immigration and border security, disaster relief, health care, and providing adequate levels of defense spending . . . just to name a few,” McConnell said.

With 16 days left to work out an agreement, White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders insisted in Tuesday’s



Trump wants funding for a border wall. ■ Video: newsday.com/nation

daily press briefing, that any deal reached by the Senate must include funding for the border wall, an end to the diversity-based visa lottery program, and an overhaul to the family reunification visa program that allows U.S. citizens to request residency in the country for foreign-born relatives and spouses.

Sanders said Trump would not sign off on bipartisan legislation to save DACA brought forth two weeks ago by Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), saying their proposal did not meet the president’s benchmarks on border wall funding and visa reforms.

“It’s totally unacceptable to the president and should be declared dead on arrival,” she told reporters.

Sanders said Trump would continue to work with leaders in both parties to hammer out a compromise, but since Monday Trump has only met with Republican lawmakers on the issue.

On Monday, Trump met with six Republican senators in a closed-door meeting at the White House, according to Sanders, including Tom Cotton (R-Arkansas), and David Perdue (R-Ga.), who have called for tougher immigration enforcement laws.

NY Dreamers to get state-funded health care

BY VÍCTOR MANUEL RAMOS
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Tens of thousands of young immigrants in New York who could lose their protection from deportation will not go without government-funded health care under a policy announced Tuesday by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo.

The status of the so-called Dreamers — immigrants who were brought to or stayed in the United States illegally as children — was at the heart of the recent political showdown between Democrats and Republicans in the Senate and President

Donald Trump, who’s seeking to phase out the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA program, that shielded them from deportation.

Cuomo’s policy means they “will remain eligible for state-funded Medicaid” and the New York Child Health Plus insurance known as CHIP, “regardless of any federal changes to or termination of the program,” the governor’s office said.

Up to 42,000 DACA recipients in New York could benefit.

“The federal government’s failure to take action to protect DACA recipients is appalling, un-

American, unjust and puts hundreds of thousands of children at risk,” said a statement from Cuomo. “Here in New York we will do everything in our power to protect DACA recipients and ensure they receive health care.”

Cuomo’s announcement comes on the heels of a deal that put an end to the weekend’s federal government shutdown. The deal was hinged on a promise by GOP leaders to allow debate in coming weeks on legislation that would provide a permanent substitute for DACA, an executive action former President Barack Obama signed to allow Dreamers

to stay pending wider reforms. Trump and leaders of both parties have said they favor a legislative solution that would grant legal status to qualified Dreamers.

The governor’s office said the cost of continuing coverage would be included in the Medicaid budget, as Dreamers would qualify for the health aid “under an immigration category known as . . . permanently residing under color of law,” meaning they’ve had continuous residence in the country.

The office of state Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan (R-East Northport) did not respond to a request for comment.

“This is a really meaningful decision,” said Max Hadler, senior health policy manager with the New York Immigration Coalition, a Manhattan-based group for immigrant advocacy. If the push to end DACA prevails, “on top of losing their access to work legally, many would have been losing their health insurance.”

Cuomo’s commitment “will not just benefit immigrant youth,” said Osman Canales, founder of the Long Island Immigrant Student Advocates, “but the state as a whole by having people who live here be healthier and continue the different treatments they need.”