



THE DREAM ACT: GOOD FOR OUR ECONOMY, GOOD FOR OUR SECURITY, GOOD FOR OUR NATION

The DREAM Act is common-sense legislation drafted by both Republicans and Democrats that would give students who grew up in the United States a chance to contribute to our country's well-being by serving in the U.S. armed forces or pursuing a higher education. It's good for our economy, our security, and our nation. That's why the DREAM Act has long enjoyed bipartisan support. It's limited, targeted legislation that will allow only the best and brightest young people to earn their legal status after a rigorous and lengthy process, and applies to those brought to the United States as minors through no fault of their own by their parents, and who know no other home.

Our country will reap enormous benefits when the DREAM Act is finally enacted:

- **The DREAM Act will contribute to our military's recruitment efforts and readiness.** Secretary of Defense Gates has written to DREAM Act sponsors citing the rich precedent of non-citizens serving in the U.S. military and stating that "the DREAM Act represents an opportunity to expand [the recruiting] pool, to the advantage of military recruiting and readiness." The DREAM Act is also a part of the Department of Defense's [2010-2012 Strategic Plan](#) to assist the military in its recruiting efforts.
- **The DREAM Act will make our country more competitive in the global economy.** Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has stated that passing the DREAM Act will allow "these young people to live up to their fullest potential and contribute to the economic growth of our country." In particular, the DREAM Act will play an important part in the nation's efforts to have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020," something vital for America to remain competitive in today's global economy.
- **The DREAM Act will have important economic benefits.** According to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, the DREAM Act in its current form will cut the deficit by \$1.4 billion *and increase government revenues by \$2.3 billion* over the next 10 years. According to a recent UCLA study, students that would be impacted by the DREAM Act could add between \$1.4 to \$3.6 trillion in taxable income to our economy over the course of careers, depending on how many ultimately gain legal status. This income is substantially higher than the income they would earn if they were unable to attend and complete a college education. In fact, research indicates that the average college graduate earned nearly 60 percent more than a high-school graduate. We have much to gain from doing right by these young people.
- **The DREAM Act will allow our immigration and border security experts to focus on those who pose a serious threat to our nation's security.** Secretary Napolitano believes this targeted legislation provides a firm but fair way to deal with innocent children brought to the U.S. at a young age so that the Department of Homeland Security

can dedicate their enforcement resources to detaining and deporting criminals and those who pose a threat to our country.

Myths vs. Facts: DREAM Act

As the public debate on the DREAM Act moves forward, it is vital that the facts on this important legislation remain clear. The Dream Act is good for our economy, our security, and our nation. And the lengthy and rigorous process the DREAM Act establishes will ensure that our nation is enriched with only the most promising young people who have already grown up in America. In fact, according to a recent analysis by the Migration Policy Institute, just 38 percent of all potential beneficiaries will successfully complete the DREAM Act's rigorous process and earn permanent immigration status.

Myth: Opponents claim the DREAM Act is "amnesty."

Fact: The Dream Act requires responsibility and accountability of young people who apply to adjust their status under the DREAM Act, creating a lengthy and rigorous process.

- **Young people must meet several requirements in order to qualify for the conditional status it will provide them.** These requirements include entering the country when they were under 16 years old, proving they have continuously lived in the U.S. for at least 5 years and graduated from a U.S. high school or obtained a GED; demonstrating their good moral character; proving they have not committed any crimes that would make them inadmissible to the country. Only then can they obtain a conditional status for a limited period of time.
- **After their six year conditional status, these same individuals will need to meet additional requirements to move on to the next phase of this process.** Specifically, they must have attended college or served in the U.S. military for at least 2 years, and once again, pass criminal background checks, and demonstrate good moral character. If young people are unable to fulfill these requirements, they will lose their legal status and be subject to deportation.
- **Only applies to individuals who entered the U.S. as children.** According to DREAM Act's provisions, beneficiaries must have entered the United States when they were under 16 years old.
- **DREAM Act applicants will be responsible for paying fees to cover the costs of USCIS processing their applications.** According to Section 286(m) of Immigration and Nationality Act provisions, the cost of having U.S. Customs and Immigration Services process DREAM Act applications will be covered by the application fees.
- **DREAM Act applicants would be subject to rigorous criminal background checks and reviews.** All criminal grounds of inadmissibility and removability that apply to other aliens seeking lawful permanent resident status would apply and bar criminal aliens from gaining conditional or unconditional LPR status under the DREAM Act. Additionally, decisions to grant status are discretionary, and any alien with a criminal record not automatically barred by these provisions would only be granted status when

and if the Secretary exercises her discretion favorably.

Myth: Opponents claim the DREAM Act would encourage more students to immigrate illegally, and that applicants would just use it to petition for relatives.

Fact: The DREAM Act only applies to young people already in the United States who were brought here as children, it would not apply to anyone arriving later, so it cannot act as a “magnet” encouraging others to come. Furthermore,. DREAM Act applicants would not be able to petition for any family member until fulfilling lengthy and rigorous requirements outlined above, and even then, they would have to wait years before being able to successfully petition for parents or siblings..

- DREAM Act beneficiaries would only be able to petition for entry of their parents or sibling if they have satisfied all of the requirements under the DREAM Act. Even then, they would be subject to the same annual caps waiting periods in order to petition for their relatives; the bottom line is that it would take many years before parents or siblings who previously entered the country illegally could obtain a green card.

Myth: Opponents claim the DREAM Act would result in taxpayers having to subsidize student loans for those students who register through the DREAM Act.

Fact: DREAM Act students would not be eligible for federal grants, period.

- An alien who adjusts to lawful permanent resident status under DREAM qualifies only for certain specified types of Federal higher education assistance. Undocumented youth adjusting to lawful permanent resident status are only eligible for federal student loans which must be paid back, and federal work-study programs, where they must work for any benefit they receive. They would not be eligible for federal grants, such as Pell Grants.

What They’re Saying:

Editorials and experts around the country are agreeing that the DREAM Act is good for our nation, and have called on Congress to pass it:

Former Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez, a Republican, [said on a conference call](#) on November 29th it would be a “shame” not to pass the bill in the lame duck.

Former Secretary of State Colin Powell, [said](#) “[The Republican Party] needs to take a hard look at some of the positions they’ve been taking. We can’t be anti-immigration, for example. Immigrants are fueling this country. Without immigrants America would be like Europe or Japan with an aging population and no young people to come in and take care of it. We have to educate our immigrants. The DREAM Act is one way we can do this.”

Former Illinois Republican Governor Jim Edgar voiced his support for DREAM in an op-ed in Sunday’s *Chicago Tribune*, [writing](#): “A rational approach to comprehensive immigration reform

should begin with the young people who were brought here as babies, toddlers and adolescents...A nation as kind as ours should not turn its back on them. Congress needs to support the sensible, humane approach embodied in legislation known as the Dream Act. The measure charts a rigorous path that undocumented youths must negotiate to gain legal status and qualify for citizenship, and supporting it would be both good government and good politics."

The Wall Street Journal [published](#) an editorial that argues: "Restrictionists dismiss the Dream Act as an amnesty that rewards people who entered the country illegally. But the bill targets individuals brought here by their parents as children. What is to be gained by holding otherwise law-abiding young people, who had no say in coming to this country, responsible for the illegal actions of others? The Dream Act also makes legal status contingent on school achievement and military service, the type of behavior that ought to be encouraged and rewarded."

On August 11, 2010, **former [Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee](#)** explained to NPR the economic sense of allowing undocumented children to earn their citizenship: "When a kid comes to his country, and he's four years old and he had no choice in it - his parents came illegally. He still, because he is in this state, it's the state's responsibility - in fact, it is the state's legal mandate - to make sure that child is in school. So let's say that kid goes to school. That kid is in our school from kindergarten through the 12th grade. He graduates as valedictorian because he's a smart kid and he works his rear end off and he becomes the valedictorian of the school. The question is: Is he better off going to college and becoming a neurosurgeon or a banker or whatever he might become, and becoming a taxpayer, and in the process having to apply for and achieve citizenship, or should we make him pick tomatoes? I think it's better if he goes to college and becomes a citizen."

Education, military, religious and business leaders support the DREAM Act: The legislation is supported by a wide range of leaders from the [education](#), [military](#), and [business](#) fields, and from religious orders including the United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society; the [U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops](#); the [evangelical movement](#), the [Jewish community](#); and [many others](#).

David S. C. Chu, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness under George W. Bush, called for action on the DREAM Act to strengthen the military. "If their parents are undocumented or in immigration limbo, most of these young people have no mechanism to obtain legal residency even if they have lived most of their lives here. Yet many of these young people may wish to join the military, and have the attributes needed - education, aptitude, fitness, and moral qualifications." [*CQ Congressional Testimony; "Immigration and the Military"; July 10, 2006*]

Margaret Stock, a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve (retired); a former professor at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point; and an adjunct professor at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, said: "Potential DREAM Act beneficiaries are also likely to be a military recruiter's dream candidates for enlistment ... In a time when qualified recruits - particularly ones with foreign language skills and foreign cultural awareness - are in short supply, enforcing

deportation laws against these young people makes no sense. Americans who care about our national security should encourage Congress to pass the DREAM Act." [Margaret D. Stock, "The DREAM Act: Tapping an Overlooked Pool of Home Grown Talent." *The Federalist Society*, Washington, DC. *Engage: The Journal of the Federalist Societies Practice Group*, Volume 6, Issue 2, October 2005]

Bill Carr, former Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy, called DREAM "very appealing" to the military "because it would apply to the 'cream of the crop' of students. Mr. Carr concluded that the DREAM Act would be "good for [military] readiness." [Donna Miles, "Officials Hope to Rekindle Interest in Immigration Bill Provision." *American Forces Press Service*. June 11, 2007]

Conservative military scholar Max Boot supports the DREAM Act: "It's a substantial pool of people and I think it's crazy we are not tapping into it." The DREAM Act "would not only offer a welcome path toward citizenship for many promising young people but also might ease some of the recruitment problems that Army has been facing of late." [Max Boot, "Dream a Little Dream," *Commentary Magazine*, September 20, 2007]

The Center for Naval Analyses issued a report finding that immigrants in the military have high levels of performance and lower rates of attrition. The report noted that non-citizens add valuable diversity to the armed forces and perform extremely well, often having significantly lower attrition rates than other recruits. The report also pointed out that "much of the growth in the recruitment-eligible population will come from immigration." [CNA, "Non-Citizens in Today's Military. Final Report." April 2005. <http://www.cna.org/documents/D0011092.A2.pdf>]

Senator Richard Durbin Makes a Compelling Case for DREAM: "This is the choice the DREAM Act presents to us. We can allow a generation of immigrant students with great potential and ambitions to contribute more fully to our society and national security, or we can relegate them to a future in the shadows, which would be a loss for all Americans." [Senator Richard Durbin, Floor Statement, "DREAM Act as an amendment to the Defense authorization bill," Friday, July 13, 2007]

Editorial Pages supporting the DREAM Act

1. [New York Times: Dreaming of Reform](#), November 30, 2010
2. [Wall Street Journal \(National\): A Worthy Immigration Bill](#), November 29, 2010
3. [Santa Rosa Press-Democrat \(Calif.\): Step forward](#), November 21, 2010
4. [Battle Creek Enquirer \(Mich.\): Step toward real reform](#), November 19, 2010
5. [Fresno Bee: Sorting out hypocrisy on illegal immigration](#), November 19, 2010
6. [Los Angeles Times: A path to college](#), November 17, 2010
7. [Sacramento Bee: DREAM Act should be the law of the land](#), November 17, 2010
8. [La Opinión: The time is now!](#), November 16, 2010
9. [Denver Post: To-do list for short session](#), November 16, 2010
10. [Berkshire Eagle: Reform is a pipe dream](#), November 15, 2010
11. [Sheboygan Press: DREAM Act has merit, but do it right way](#), October 3, 2010
12. [Myrtle Beach Sun-News: Dream deferred](#), October 1, 2010
13. [Rock Hill Herald \(S.C.\): Give DREAM Act a chance](#), September 27, 2010

14. [Leaf-Chronicle \(Clarksville, Tenn.\): DREAM of being a citizen](#), September 27, 2010
15. [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: Editorial -- Dreams deferred](#), September 21, 2010
16. [San Francisco Chronicle: Editorial -- Senate should pass DREAM Act](#), September 21, 2010
17. [Arizona Republic: Editorial -- Pass DREAM Act the right way](#), September 21, 2010
18. [New York Times: Dream Time](#), September 20, 2010
19. [Los Angeles Times: The DREAM Act deserves a yes vote](#), September 20, 2010
20. [New York Daily News: Make the DREAM come true: Proposed law would clear path to earned citizenship](#), September 20, 2010
21. [La Opinión: A reasonable strategy](#), September 20, 2010
22. [Chicago Tribune: Pass the Dream Act](#), September 20, 2010
23. [Newsday: Create a path to citizenship](#), September 20, 2010
24. [Aurora Sentinel: Colin Powell is the right's voice of reason on immigration](#), September 19, 2010
25. [Deseret News: Pass the DREAM Act](#), September 17, 2010
26. [El Diario: Sí al 'DREAM Act'](#), September 17, 2010
27. [Chicago Sun-Times: Give kids here illegally chance to go to college](#), September 16, 2010
28. [San Jose Mercury News: Dream Act should transcend immigration debate](#), September 16, 2010
29. [Aurora Sentinel: Everyone benefits when this DREAM comes true](#), September 14, 2010
30. [Arizona Republic: The Dream Act is long overdue](#), August 19, 2010
31. [Fort Worth Star Telegram: Politics interrupts a dream](#), August 19, 2010
32. [Washington Post: Dream Act could save immigrant students from deportation](#), August 12, 2010 (*reprinted in the Herald-Sun (North Carolina) under the title "More American DREAMers"*)
33. [Fort Worth Star Telegram: Deporting students isn't the best answer to immigration problems](#), August 10, 2010
34. [La Opinión - The DREAM Act can't wait](#), August 8, 2010
35. [Wichita Eagle: No leadership on immigration](#), August 6, 2010
36. [Akron Beacon Journal: DREAM of an act](#), August 5, 2010
37. [Los Angeles Times: Wake up and pass the DREAM immigration reform act](#), June 26, 2010
38. [Boston Globe: Case of Harvard student shows urgency of immigration reform](#), June 18, 2010
39. [New York Times: Courage in Arizona](#), May 19, 2010
40. [Kansas City Star: Protests could block American dream](#), May 19, 2010
41. [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: The Dream Act: a path for dreams to come true](#), March 20, 2010
42. [Philadelphia Inquirer: Reaching for a dream](#), March 6, 2010
43. [Tallahassee Democrat: Dare to DREAM](#), February 9, 2010
44. [Seattle Times: Pass the Dream Act to give undocumented young people a future](#), January 28, 2010
45. [Miami Herald: Congress must pass DREAM Act](#), June 26, 2009
46. [Philadelphia Inquirer: They're not going away](#), May 1, 2009