

TALKING POINTS

THE DREAM ACT: A CENTRAL ELEMENT OF REFORM

The Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors (DREAM) Act (S. 729/H.R. 1751) is a bipartisan bill that would provide a conditional six-year pathway to legal permanent residence for certain unauthorized youth who, as children, were brought to the U.S. if they: complete high school; demonstrate good moral character; and complete at least two years of higher education or serve for at least two years in the U.S. military. The bill also would also repeal section 505 of the Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Reconciliation Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) that prohibits states from providing any higher education benefit based on residency to unauthorized immigrants unless they provide the same benefit to U.S. citizens in the same circumstances, regardless of their residence.

THE DREAM ACT CAN STRENGTHEN THE U.S. ECONOMY

The students who would benefit under the DREAM Act have been raised and educated in the U.S. and by allowing them to pursue a higher education, we are investing in the future of our country and our economy.

- **Communities, states, and nation would reap significant benefits from the DREAM Act.** A RAND study showed that a 30-year-old Mexican immigrant woman who graduated from college will pay \$5,300 more in taxes and cost \$3,900 less in government expenses each year than if she had dropped out of high school. This amounts to an annual fiscal benefit of over \$9,000 every year, money that can be used to pay for the education of others.
- **DREAM Act beneficiaries will make up part of the educated workforce needed to help the U.S. compete in the global economy.** In our globalized world, their multilingual and bicultural skills, and contributions are more important than ever to the success and global competitiveness of the United States.

CURRENT LAW PROVIDES NO WAY FOR THESE CHILDREN TO ACHIEVE LEGAL STATUS

- Due to the undocumented status of their parents and other family members, they have no available avenues for family-based visa sponsorship.
- Few employers would or could sponsor them for a work visa due to their age and lack of work experience. Even if an employer was willing to sponsor them, the process takes precious years that these children cannot afford to waste.

STATES SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE WHO QUALIFIES FOR IN-STATE TUITION

- **States are required to invest in elementary and secondary education for undocumented children, but can't collect on the return.** However, when states are ready to earn a return on their investment through a highly educated workforce, they are barred from offering in-state tuition to these children. The states (and their taxpayers) have the right to earn this return.
- **States should have the authority to determine how they allocate their resources.** Such an educational investment pays dividends for the states by reducing the dropout rate, leading to substantial savings in criminal justice costs and the use of public benefits, and sharply increasing the taxes paid by those benefiting from this initiative.

THIS BILL REFLECTS A BALANCED APPROACH TO REFORM AND MUST BE PART OF ANY COMPREHENSIVE EFFORT TO OVERHAUL OUR IMMIGRATION LAWS

- This measure would require children to have lived in the U.S. for a number of years and to have no criminal record.
- This measure would require eligible children to dedicate themselves to learning English and succeeding in our educational system.
- This measure proposes a one-time only fix that would not encourage illegal immigration.

This measure recognizes that the status quo needs to be reformed by granting children the means to continue their education and legalize their status. Such reform works for children and works for America.