



advocacy

Working together for justice.

THE DREAM ACT

An American DREAM

By anyone's standards, Andres has a bright future ahead. He was accepted into the most selective and prestigious magnet high schools in the country and excelled in his classes. He was recognized for extracurricular and volunteer work. Along with his classmates, he eagerly began the college admission process. Andres had always stood out as an excellent student. However, just as he was planning his future, he stood out for a different reason. Andres came to the U.S. with his family at age four on a visa. Overstaying their visa, the family became undocumented immigrants. Although this was not his choice, Andres paid for the decision dearly. Without access to scholarships, loans, or grants, he had to sacrifice for his dream of becoming an engineer.

Each year, 65,000 students raised in the U.S. are denied access to higher education and legal employment due to the fact that they arrived as children with parents who lacked or were unable to maintain legal status. These young people speak English, have progressed through the U.S. school system and often have little memory or connection to their country of origin.

What is the DREAM Act?

The DREAM (The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) ACT 2009 is bipartisan legislation that would provide the opportunity to young people with good moral character, who have lived in the U.S. for at least five years and graduated from high school to legalize their status. Students qualify for a 6-year conditional permanent resident status if he or she entered the country before age 16, lived in the U.S. for at least five years before passage of the DREAM Act, and earned a high school diploma. Permanent resident status is available upon completion of two years of higher education or military service. The DREAM Act will not apply to students with criminal records or dishonorable discharges from the military. Instead of punishing students for actions taken on their behalf and beyond their control, the DREAM Act would provide a tough but fair process by which they could gain legal status.

Why is it important?

Every child growing up in America deserves the opportunity to become a productive member of society and achieve their dreams. Withholding legal status from these children not only hurts them, but it deprives America of future generations of dedicated citizens, innovators, entrepreneurs and public servants. Individuals brought to the U.S. as children have no control over the circumstances that caused their parents to immigrate. Let them now take control of their futures through education, hard work and legalization. Help them achieve their American dreams by giving back to the country they call home. As part of the commitment to humane and just immigration reform the Episcopal Church supports the DREAM Act and calls upon Congress to pass this important legislation this year.

What is happening in Congress?

The act was introduced to Congress on March 26, 2009 by Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Richard Lugar (R-IN) in the Senate as S. 729 and in the House by Representatives Howard Berman (D-CA), Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL), and Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) as H.R 1751.

How can I be involved in passage of the DREAM Act?

The DREAM Act is currently being considered in both the House and the Senate. It is extremely important that your Senators and Representatives know that you support this bill. Call the Capitol Switchboard (202-224-3121) and ask your Representatives and Senators to support the DREAM Act today!

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