

The DREAM Act

Legislation to offer undocumented children an opportunity to achieve the American Dream

*So the woman remained and nursed her son, until she weaned him.
When she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull,
an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine. She brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh;
and the child was young. 1 Sam 1:23b-24*

Information:

Parents who come to the United States without proper documentation often come so that their children may have a better life. However, these children have few options after graduating high school. Children brought into the United States by their parents, even at very young ages, can be deported even though they may not even speak the language or have any family members in their country of origin. They are unable to obtain federal identification, have no legal right to work, cannot enlist/serve in the military, or often attend colleges and universities.

There is hope for these children who have no country to call home. Pending legislation would provide an opportunity for them to work toward fulfilling their dreams and the dreams their parents carried with them into the United States. Under the DREAM Act, a student would qualify for a 6-year conditional permanent resident status if he or she:

1. Arrived in the U.S. under the age of 16;
2. Lived in the U.S. for at least 5 years before the date of the enactment of the DREAM Act; and
3. Completed high school or earned a GED

The student would be able to convert to a permanent resident status if during the following 6 years after high school, they either complete 2 years at a 2-year or 4-year college or serve in the armed forces for at least 2 years. Students

would not qualify for the program if they have committed certain crimes, are a security risk, or are inadmissible or removable on certain other grounds.

Insight:

Without the DREAM Act, children of undocumented immigrants have no future. In addition to helping young adults brought to the US as children, the DREAM Act will strengthen the US economy and invest in the future workforce. A RAND study showed that a 30-year old immigrant woman who graduates from college will pay \$5,300 more in taxes each year than if she only has a high school diploma.

Parents come to the United States searching for a better life for their children but they will remain out of reach. Further, young adults brought here as children without documents did not have a choice in coming to the United States, they should not be punished for a choice their parents made.



Invitation to Act:

Contact Congressional Representatives and ask them to co-sponsor and support the DREAM Act. It is best and most effective to write a letter but making a telephone call is also beneficial. For more information about the DREAM Act, visit

<http://www.nilc.org/immlawpolicy/DREAM> and click on "DREAM Act".

What should I say? - An aide will answer the phone when you call. It is important to be polite and courteous to these civil servants. Tell the aide your name and that you are a constituent from the Senator or Representative's home state. A sample script is below however it is important that you say what is important to YOU and why YOU believe legalization for young adults is important to your community and church.

Hello, this is Jane Doe from Your City. I'm calling to encourage Senator/Representative Doe to Co-sponsor and support the Dream Act. I believe that law abiding young adults deserve the right to work toward citizenship.

The DREAM Act is on Facebook – join and meet other advocates and receive updates from their page.

Write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper that encourages people to learn about the DREAM Act and the situation facing the children of undocumented immigrants.

To learn more about the students facing the challenges of immigration, visit

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y2k4oCqC4o0> and watch the video.

Inquire:

Hannah dreamed of having a son and promised that if she would bear a son that she would dedicate him to God. After weaning him she made a long trip to the House of the Lord in order that her dreams for her son would be realized. Immigrant parents have dreams for their children as well and pray that they will grow up to be a gift and blessing. Join in prayer for the children of immigrants who are American yet do not have the means to improve their future without help.

Holy God of Hannah and all mothers who pray for children, wean them, and pass along dreams for their future, we pray your blessings upon the children of undocumented immigrants. These young adults and children in our midst are without a voice in our social and political system. God we pray for their future, a future filled with opportunity, success, and faith. May they feel your presence and believe that they are always wanted and valued for their contributions to the world. It is in your son's name that we pray for all sons and daughters. Amen.

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