

DREAM Act Coming to the Senate Floor

Senator Reid to Attach Act to Defense Authorization Bill

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Washington, D.C. - Yesterday, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid announced that he would attach the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act to the Department of Defense authorization bill expected to come before the Senate as early as next week. The vote will be an important test of whether Congress can transcend partisan politics and work together on crafting solutions to the broken immigration system that both Democrats and Republicans acknowledge is in desperate need of reform. That the proposal will be considered as an amendment to the Defense Authorization bill is appropriate, given the Department of Defense's support for DREAM Act as a way to improve military readiness.

First introduced in 2001, the DREAM Act would address the plight of young immigrants who have been raised in the U.S. and managed to succeed despite the challenges of being brought to the U.S. without proper documentation. The proposal would offer a path to legal status to those who have graduated from high-school, have stayed out of trouble and plan to attend college or serve in the U.S. military for at least two years.

Each year, approximately 65,000 undocumented students graduate from high school, many at the top of their classes, but cannot go to college, join the military, work, or otherwise pursue their dreams. They belong to the 1.5 generation - any (first generation) immigrants brought to the United States at a young age who were largely raised in this country and therefore share much in common with second generation Americans. These students are culturally American, growing up here and often having little attachment to their country of birth. They tend to be bicultural and fluent in English.

Research has shown that providing a legal status for young people who have a proven record of success in the United States would be a [boon to the economy](#) [1] and the U.S. workforce. University presidents and educational associations, as well as military recruiters, business and religious leaders have added their voice to those calling for passage of the bill. Foreign-born students represent a significant and growing percentage of the current student population. Unfortunately, immigration status and the associated barriers to higher education contribute to a higher-than-average high dropout rate, which costs taxpayers and the economy billions of dollars each year.

The DREAM Act would eliminate these barriers for many students, and the DREAM Act's high school graduation requirement would provide a powerful incentive for students who might otherwise drop out to stay in school and graduate. This will help boost the number of high skilled American-raised workers. As they take their place in the workplace as hard working, taxpaying Americans, they will contribute a lifetime of revenues at the local, state and federal level.

Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy, Bill Carr, supports the DREAM Act and stated that the law would be "good for readiness" and would help to recruit "cream of the crop" students. The DREAM Act is part of the Department of Defense's [2010-2012 Strategic Plan](#) [2] to assist the military in its recruiting efforts.

For more information on the DREAM Act see:

- [The DREAM Act: Creating Opportunities for Immigrant Students and Supporting the U.S.](#)

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Published on Immigration Policy Center (<http://www.immigrationpolicy.org>)

Economy[3] (IPC Fact Check, July 2010)

- [Essential to the Fight: Immigrants in the Military](#) [4] (IPC Special Report, November, 2009)
- [IPC DREAM Act Resource Page](#) [5]

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Links:

- [1] <http://immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/dream-act#economic>
- [2] [http://prhome.defense.gov/DOCS/FY2010-12 PR Strategic Plan \(Final Public\)\(4 January\).pdf](http://prhome.defense.gov/DOCS/FY2010-12 PR Strategic Plan (Final Public)(4 January).pdf)
- [3] http://immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/Dream_Act_071310_0.pdf
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