

For Immediate Release

Scholars United Behind DREAM Act

December 8, 2010

Washington D.C. - Today, more than fifty leading university professors urged Congress to pass the DREAM Act, noting that both their academic research and their work as teachers compelled them to speak out on behalf of the undocumented students whose future hangs in the balance over today's vote. These scholars, who have dedicated their professional lives to studying migration-related issues, noted:

We, a group of university professors who study immigration and the circumstances confronting these young people, and who have many of these students in our classes, believe passing the DREAM Act is the right thing to do for our nation's immediate interests and for our long term security... After decades of research it is clear that, by punishing the children of undocumented immigrants, this country is creating a disenfranchised group of young people cut off from the very mechanisms that would allow them to contribute to our economy and society ... It is especially troubling and wasteful that some 2.1 million unauthorized children, American in spirit but not in law, are now enrolled in U.S. schools but will not be able to lawfully gain employment at the end of their education.

Over these last weeks and months we have seen our own students--those who are in our classrooms--struggle to meet school expenses, graduate from our universities, and then face uncertain futures and the constant risk of deportation. But we have also witnessed their incredible capacity to thrive despite debilitating circumstances. Gaby Pacheco, who, along with 3 others walked from Miami to Washington DC, holds three degrees from Miami Dade College. She dreams of practicing music therapy with autistic children... What is to be gained from limiting her opportunities?

[The DREAM Act] is an important step in fixing America's broken immigration system, and it should be passed. U.S. raised children, like Gaby Pacheco, who benefit from the Dream Act will see their hard work rewarded and, in turn, will contribute even more to the U.S., through higher earnings and taxes paid. And they will be our future teachers, community leaders, and professionals. As we think of students like Gaby Pacheco and the impact they are currently making, let us imagine the potential impact--and multiply it by 2.1 million. The America that we believe in, and that these idealistic youth believe in, would pass the Dream Act.

Ben Johnson, Executive Director of the American Immigration Council, stated: "The support of these university professors for their students, driven not only by their compassion but by their years of research, is further evidence that the DREAM Act offers America a chance to begin the process of rebuilding our broken immigration system, allow deserving students to contribute to the country they love, and drive the economic growth of our nation for the next generation."

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