

Debate: DREAM Act

Is the US Dream Act a good idea? []

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Background and context

The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act (the DREAM Act) is a piece of proposed federal legislation in the United States that was first introduced in the United States Senate on August 1, 2001 and most recently re-introduced there and the United States House of Representatives on March 26, 2009.

This bill would provide certain illegal and deportable alien students who graduate from US high schools, who are of good moral character, arrived in the U.S. illegally as minors, and have been in the country continuously and illegally for at least five years prior to the bill's enactment, the opportunity to earn conditional permanent residency if they complete two years in the military or two years at a four year institution of higher learning. The students would obtain temporary residency for a six year period. Within the six year period, a qualified student must have "acquired a degree from an institution of higher education in the United States or [have] completed at least 2 years, in good standing, in a program for a bachelor's degree or higher degree in the United States," or have "served in the uniformed services for at least 2 years and, if discharged, [have] received an honorable discharge." Military enlistment contracts require an eight year commitment, with active duty commitments typically between four and six years, but as low as two years. "Any alien whose permanent resident status is terminated [according to the terms of the Act] shall return to the immigration status the alien had immediately prior to receiving conditional permanent resident status under this Act."

Path to citizenship: Is the DREAM Act's "earned" citizenship a good idea?

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- **DREAM Act is "earned citizenship", not amnesty.** ["Debunking DREAM Act disinformation."](#) *The Economist, Democracy in America.* Nov 30th 2010: "it's not quite right to think of DREAM, a narrowly tailored provision that offers a relatively small group of young people a path to citizenship only if they are able to clear a number of hurdles, as an 'amnesty'."
- **DREAM Act offers citizenship to youth already "Americans".** [Rep Charles Rangle \(D-NY\). "Why the DREAM Act is so important."](#) *Huffington Post.* December 13, 2010: "Many of these students may have arrived here illegally by their parents, but they have been raised as Americans. They salute the flag, recite the Pledge of Allegiance and sing the Star-Spangled Banner. They are Boy Scouts, prom queens and class valedictorians. And they too want to give back by becoming professionals or serving in the military."
- **Children not responsible for illegal immigration of parents.** [Kavitha Rajagopalan."OPINION: Dream Act makes sense for immigrants and U.S. economy."](#) *News Day.* November 18th, 2010: "The children who were brought

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- **If DREAM Act about Americanized kids, why allow 16 year-olds?** [Mark Krikorian. "DREAM On"](#) *National Review.* December 1, 2010: "1. The act is billed as legalizing those brought as infants or toddlers, and yet it covers people brought here up to age 16. The examples used by advocates are nearly always people who were brought here very young. The student-body president at Fresno State University, Pedro Ramirez — who was "coincidentally" revealed to be an illegal alien just as the DREAM Act lame-duck effort got under way — came here at age three. Harvard student Eric Balderas was brought here at age four. Yves Gomes was brought here at 14 months, Juan Gomez at two years, Marie Gonzalez at five, Dan-el Padilla at four, and so on. So why set the age cutoff at 16? If the point is to provide amnesty to those

here illegally had no say in their migration, and under the provisions of the Dream Act, they will have spent their formative years as U.S. residents. When we punish them for a crime they didn't commit, we further punish our bruised economy."

- **DREAM Act shows compassion, hope, opportunity to young aliens.** ["The message the DREAM Act sends."](#) [The Economist, Democracy in America. Nov 21st 2010](#): "The DREAM Act sends the message that although American immigration law in effect tries to make water run uphill, we are not monsters. It says that we will not hobble the prospects of young people raised and schooled in America just because we were so perverse to demand that their parents wait in a line before a door that never opens. It signals that we were once a nation of immigrants, and even if we have become too fearful and small to properly honour that noble legacy, America in some small way remains a land of opportunity."

whose identity was formed here, then you'd need a much lower age cutoff. I have a 15-year-old, and if I took him to live illegally in Mexico (and living illegally is a lot harder to do there than here), he would always remain, psychologically, an American, because his identity is already formed. The Roman Catholic Church and English common law set the age of reason at seven. That, combined with a requirement of at least ten years' continuous residence here, seems like a much more defensible place to draw the line. Unless, of course, you're just using those who came as young children to bootstrap a larger amnesty."

- **DREAM Act gives scholarships to illegals, but not legals** ["DREAM Act: A Really Lame Duck."](#) [The Heritage Foundation, Protect America. November 22nd, 2010](#): "Among several other concerns, the DREAM Act rewards those who violated immigration laws by granting them in-state tuition while state laws deny legal aliens on student visas tuition benefits."

Security: Would the DREAM Act enhance homeland security?

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- **DREAM doesn't apply to future illegals; doesn't incentivize immigration.**

["Debunking DREAM Act disinformation."](#) [The Economist, Democracy in America. Nov 30th 2010](#): "DREAM is a niggardly, one-time affair. According to the text of the bill, DREAM applies only if "the alien has been physically present in the United States for a continuous period of not less than 5 years immediately preceding the date of enactment of this Act..." That is to say, DREAM wouldn't apply to kids who came to America three years ago, much less to any kids who comes in the future."

- **DREAM Act allows DHS to focus on real security threats.** [DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano. "How the DREAM Act Would Bolster Our Homeland Security."](#) [The White House Blog. December 14, 2010](#): "The DREAM Act would bolster the Department of Homeland Security's ability to focus our limited enforcement resources on detaining and removing criminal aliens and those who pose a threat to our national security and public safety."
- **No threats to US will be admitted under DREAM Act.** [DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano. "How the DREAM Act Would Bolster Our Homeland Security."](#) [The White House Blog. December 14, 2010](#): "To be clear, no one who poses a threat to public safety will be able to adjust

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- **DREAM Act encourages more illegal immigration** [Mark Krikorian. "DREAM On" National Review. December 1, 2010](#): "3. Another problem with DREAM, which all amnesties share, is that it will attract new illegal immigration. Prospective illegal immigrants, considering their options, are more likely to opt to come if they see that their predecessors eventually hit the jackpot. In 1986, we had an estimated 5 million illegals, 3 million of whom were legalized. We now have more than twice as many as before the last amnesty, and they've been promised repeatedly that if they hold out a little longer they'll be able to stay legally. Any new amnesty, even if only for those brought here as children, will attract further illegal immigration."
- **DREAM Act ignores problem of fraud in applications** [Mark Krikorian. "DREAM On" National Review. December 1, 2010](#): "2...all amnesties have at least three harmful consequences, and the DREAM Act ignores all three. The first of these is massive fraud. Perhaps one-fourth of those legalized under the 1986

their status under the DREAM Act. The bill ensures applicants will undergo a rigorous background check, and individuals who committed offenses that are grounds for removal will be barred from relief. It is a narrowly-tailored, bipartisan bill that would allow a select group of immigrant students with great potential to contribute more fully to America."

Immigration Reform and Control Act received amnesty fraudulently, including Mahmud Abouhalima, a leader of the first World Trade Center attack. [...] what does the DREAM Act say about fraud? [...] the measure 'prohibits using any of the information contained in the amnesty application (name, address, length of illegal presence that the alien admits to, etc.) to initiate a removal proceeding or investigate or prosecute fraud in the application process.' This is like playing a slot machine without having to put any money in — any illegal alien can apply, and if he wins, great, but if he loses, he can't be prosecuted even if he lied through his teeth about everything."

- **DREAM Act undermines integrity of US immigration laws**

Parental exploitation: Will parents exploit DREAM to gain citizenship?

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- **Illegals cannot use legalized children to gain citizenship** "Debunking DREAM Act disinformation." *The Economist, Democracy in America*. Nov 30th 2010: "So, you're Mr Frum's 40-year-old undocumented immigrant. DREAM, which requires you to be between 12 and 35 at the time of application, does nothing for you, even if you did come into the country as a child. But you have a daughter who does qualifies. Woohoo! You're in like Flynn, right? Well, no. Probably not. Suppose DREAM becomes law in 2011. Your kid applies right away and earns status as a "conditional legal resident" (or "CLR"). Now, can you your kid sponsor you for legal permanent residency? No, she cannot. Only citizens can sponsor their parents. Suppose your kid goes to college and stays out of trouble. The earliest she can apply to become an "LPR" or "legal permanent resident" (ie, get a green card) is 5 1/2 years after approval for conditional permanent residency. That's some time in 2016 at the earliest. Now, a green card-holder can apply for citizenship after five years. Under DREAM, as I understand it, once a CLR is approved for a green card, the time spent as a CLR counts

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- **DREAM Act encourages bringing kids across for citizenship** David Frum. "A DREAM bill that's more like a nightmare." *The Week*. November 25th, 2010: "Possibility No. 2: You're a 40-year-old illegal alien who entered the country as an adult. You have a third-grade education. You are barely literate even in Spanish. Your back is bothering you; you are not sure how long you can continue working. Quite frankly, no country on earth would regard you as a desirable immigrant. Don't despair. DREAM can offer you too an amnesty and gain you access to a lifetime of taxpayer-funded disability payments. You have kids don't you? If they apply successfully under DREAM, they can sponsor you. While some talk about DREAM applicants as "skilled" immigrants, in fact the law's requirements are so lenient that your kids would have to mess up very seriously to forfeit the law's benefits. All they need to do is enroll in some institution of higher

toward citizenship. So someone approved for a green card under the auspices of DREAM ought to be able to apply for citizenship right away. Let's assume miracles from the bureaucracy and say all these applications are processed and approved at the speed of light. So, thanks to DREAM, your daughter will be a citizen no sooner than 2016, at which point she can finally sponsor you (as long as she's over the age of 21). But don't get excited yet! You entered the country illegally, and were working illegally before applying for a green card, and that means you aren't eligible for a green card. (See question 10 here.) So, sorry, DREAM can't help you." [Read rest of quote on argument page.]

learning or the military and survive there for two years. Graduation is not required."

Economics: Is the DREAM Act economically sound?

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- **DREAM Act allows young aliens to produce more in economy** Rep. Michael Honda (D-Calif.). "Do the right thing and pass the DREAM Act." The Hill. September 21st, 2010: "Our current law doesn't make sense. Each year, tens of thousands of potential new taxpayers and higher wage earners enter our job market, yet we undermine their ability to contribute meaningfully to our economy. Our high schools are graduating roughly 65,000 undocumented students each year, and these thousands are entering the marketplace far from equipped to improve their circumstances or contribute meaningfully to our economy. [...] Had these students been able to receive, and later pay back, federal loans for university training and eventually a college diploma, they would be able to contribute over \$9,000 annually to our economy - that is, roughly \$5,300 more in taxes and \$3,900 less in government expenses (i.e., social services made available to the general public)." [read rest of quote in argument page.]
- **Young illegal immigrants are US asset needing development** Young illegal immigrants are here to stay.

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- **DREAM Act is bad for American employment.** Steve King. "Op-Ed: The DREAM Act Is An Amnesty Bill That America Cannot Afford." Free Republic. December 6th, 2010: "President Obama and the liberal open-border leadership of the Democratic Party are pushing for passage of legislation granting amnesty to millions of illegal aliens. They are doing this despite the fact that this costly legislation will make a difficult job market worse. [...] With the unemployment rate at 9.8 percent the last thing American job hunters need is millions of DREAM Act amnesty recipients competing with them for work.
- **DREAM Act is very expensive.** Steven A. Camarota. "Estimating the Impact of the DREAM Act." Center for Immigration Studies. November 2010: "On average, each illegal immigrant who attends a public institution will receive a tuition subsidy from taxpayers of nearly \$6,000 for each year he or she attends, for total cost of \$6.2 billion a year, not including other forms of financial assistance they may

They can either be treated as assets and developed, or treated as criminals and allowed to fester unused.

- **DREAM Act is valuable to economic recovery** Kavitha Rajagopalan."OPINION: Dream Act makes sense for immigrants and U.S. economy." News Day. November 18th, 2010: "Experts project it would inject billions of dollars into the economy through consumer spending, tax revenue, and savings on criminal justice and health care costs over the next decade."
- **DREAM Act will increase govt revenue and budgets.** The Congressional Budget Office estimates the DREAM Act would reduce the deficit by \$1.4 billion over the next 10 years due to increased tax revenue.[1]
- **Poor illegal aliens unlikely to be healthy (costly)**

also receive."

- **DREAM Act relies on shrinking US financial resources.** National Commander Jimmie L. Foster said on December 13th, 2010: "The United States has dwindling financial resources, as those in the veterans and military communities are frequently reminded. Why would we want to spend those limited resources on educating people who have no legal right to be in this country? The American Legion has a comprehensive immigration strategy. That strategy begins with securing our borders." [2]

Public support: Where does public support stand?

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- **University leaders almost universally support DREAM Act.** "A letter from our university presidents: 'Why we support the DREAM Act'." Immigrant Youth Justice League. December 1, 2010
Rob Anderson. "Do any university presidents oppose the DREAM Act?"

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- **DREAM Act unsupported without comprehensive reform.** Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C): "There's no way I can go to the people in South Carolina and say, 'Let's pass the Dream Act,' when we've done nothing on the border and there's a raging war in Mexico. Most

Boston. December 13, 2010

• **Republican opposition alienates**

Latino vote. Jaime Regalado, executive director of the Edmund G. 'Pat' Brown Institute of Public Affairs at Cal State Los Angeles: "The longer the Republican Party appears to be the party that is adamantly against the most important issues to the Latino community, the more they threaten any long-term attempts to create a political party that includes Latinos."[\[3\]](#)

Hispanics I talk to know that it's got to be comprehensive; they want the border security."[\[4\]](#)

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- DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano. "How the DREAM Act Would Bolster Our Homeland Security." The White House Blog. December 14, 2010
- Rep Charles Rangle (D-NY). "Why the DREAM Act is so important." Huffington Post. December 13, 2010
- Michael Gerson. "How the Dream Act transcends politics." Washington Post. December 7th, 2010
- Stephen V. Sundborg. "Our DREAM students." LA Times. November 24th, 2010
- Kavitha Rajagopalan. "OPINION: Dream Act makes sense for immigrants and U.S. economy." News Day. November 18th, 2010
- "The message the DREAM Act sends." The Economist, Democracy in America. Nov 21st 2010
- "Debunking DREAM Act disinformation." The Economist, Democracy in America. Nov 30th 2010
- "A worthy immigration bill." Wall Street Journal Outlook. November 27th, 2010
- "A letter from our university presidents: Why we support the DREAM Act." Immigration Youth Justice League. December 1, 2010
- "Dream Act may come back to haunt the GOP." Los Angeles Times. December 14th, 2010

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- Heather MacDonald. "Trust Reason, Not Emotion, on the DREAM Act." National Review Online. November 18, 2010
- David Frum. "A DREAM bill that's more like a nightmare." The Week. November 25th, 2010
- Steven A. Camarota. "Estimating the Impact of the DREAM Act." Center for Immigration Studies. November 2010
- Mark Krikorian. "DREAM On" National Review. December 1, 2010
- "DREAM Act: A Really Lame Duck." The Heritage Foundation, Protect America. November 22nd, 2010

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See also

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External links

- [Jim Kouri. "War vets oppose DREAM Act; Claim it rewards crime." Examiner. December 13th, 2010](#)

Source: http://debatepedia.idebate.org/en/index.php/Debate:_DREAM_Act