

## THE TRUTH ABOUT THE DREAM ACT

The Dream Act is bipartisan, targeted legislation that gives students who grew up in the United States a chance to contribute to our country's well-being by serving in the Armed Forces or pursuing a higher education. The bill is good for our economy, our security, and our nation.

**FACT: The DREAM Act is NOT amnesty.**

The DREAM Act sets forth a decade-long process for a limited group of young people who were brought to the U.S. years ago as children—and thus did nothing wrong themselves—to resolve their immigration status, thereby allowing America to derive the full benefit of their talents. As the Wall Street Journal editorialized on November 27, “what is to be gained by holding otherwise law-abiding young people, who had no say in coming to this country, responsible for the illegal actions of others?”

**FACT: The DREAM Act is narrowly tailored.**

The bill imposes strict standards specifying which young people brought to the U.S. as children are able to obtain conditional status. They must prove that they:

- Are in the U.S. ALREADY and have lived here for many years (at least 5 years before the DREAM Act became law);
- Were brought to the U.S. when they were children (15 years old or younger);
- Are currently 29 years old or younger;
- Have graduated from a U.S. high school, obtained a GED, or have been admitted to an institution of higher education;
- Have submitted biometric information and undergone background checks;
- Have good moral character and are not inadmissible or deportable under certain grounds in immigration laws, including all criminal and security-related grounds and more;
- Have undergone a medical examination and do not pose a health risk to the community; and
- Have registered for the Selective Service.

**FACT: The DREAM Act does NOT provide automatic citizenship.**

The process for DREAM Act students to become U.S. citizens will take a minimum of 13 years, without factoring in administrative backlogs and delays. The requirements to maintain status during these 13 years are so strict that the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) estimates that less than 40 percent of immigrants who were brought here as children and meet the age and residence requirements will be able to meet all of the other requirements for a green card.

After 5 years in conditional status, participants must demonstrate that they have:

- Earned a degree from an institution of higher education;
- Completed at least two years of post-secondary education in good standing towards a bachelor's degree; or
- Served in the U.S. armed forces for at least two years and, if discharged, has received an honorable discharge.

Meeting these requirements would permit them to remain in conditional status for a second 5 years. They would be able to apply for a green card only after 10 years of successfully maintaining conditional status. To be eligible for a green card, in addition to the requirements for conditional status, they must show that they have paid all of their taxes and have met the English and civics citizenship requirements.

They would be able to apply for U.S. citizenship only after they have spent an additional 3 years as permanent residents. Therefore, 13 years would be the earliest that a DREAM Act participant could become a U.S. citizen.

**FACT: The DREAM Act will NOT apply to children brought here illegally in the future.**

The DREAM Act only applies to children and young people who ALREADY live in the U.S. and, indeed, have already lived here a large proportion of their lives. To qualify for the DREAM Act, the applicant must have entered the U.S. as a child (age 15 or under) and have lived in the United States for at least the five continuous years before DREAM Act is signed into law.

**FACT: Any criminal who applies for the DREAM Act will only hasten their deportation.**

Anyone who has committed a deportable crime and applies for the DREAM Act will have their application denied and will immediately be placed in removal proceedings. In addition, the DREAM Act creates a new criminal offense punishable by imprisonment of 5 years for anyone who commits fraud on a DREAM Act application. Opponents have tried to twist a common sense provision that prevents young people who are apparently eligible (prima facie eligible) for the DREAM Act from being deported while their application is being considered into something it is not.

**FACT: The DREAM Act facilitates, not hinders, sharing of information on a DREAM Act application with law enforcement entities.**

The DREAM Act requires the Department of Homeland Security to provide information from an individual's application to any federal, state, tribal, or local law enforcement agency, or intelligence or national security agency in any criminal investigation or prosecution or for homeland security or national security purposes.

**FACT: The Dream Act will NOT permit "chain migration" of family members.**

DREAM Act individuals will not be able to sponsor family members for permanent residency for a very long time. For the first 10 years of their conditional status, DREAM participants would have absolutely no ability to sponsor any family members, not even spouses or minor children. ONLY after they have earned permanent residency at the end of that 10-year period would they be able to sponsor their spouses and children. Even then, they would have to go to the end of the line like everyone else, a line that can take several years. ONLY when they earn citizenship after at least 13 years in conditional and permanent resident status would they be able to begin the process of sponsoring their parents and siblings. But even then, parents and siblings who entered the U.S. illegally would have to leave the country for at least 10 years before they could reenter legally. DREAM Act participants would NEVER be able to sponsor extended family members, such as grandparents and cousins.

**FACT: The DREAM Act denies participants access to most government benefits.**

During their 10 years of conditional status, participants are expressly excluded from Medicaid, SCHIP, Food Stamps and other major government benefits programs. They are also specifically excluded from receiving any government health care subsidies created by the Affordable Care Act. They would only be eligible for social insurance programs after they have paid into them with their own earned income for at least 40 quarters, such as the Social Security Disability Insurance program. However, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has estimated that very few of the youthful DREAM Act students would need or apply for this assistance. They would be eligible for federal student loans, but only because they must be paid back, and federal work-study programs, where they must work for any benefit they receive.

**FACT: The DREAM Act does NOT provide in-state tuition or federal education grants to undocumented students.**

Unlike the introduced version, the amended version of the DREAM Act does NOT affect the current federal restriction on in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants. DREAM applicants are expressly prohibited from obtaining Pell grants, Federal supplemental educational opportunity grants and other federal grants in the bill.

**FACT: The DREAM Act does NOT diminish opportunities for U.S. citizen students.**

According to educators and business leaders, America must increase the proportion of individuals who graduate from high school and go on to college in order to remain competitive in the global economy. The DREAM Act will help achieve this goal by reducing drop-out rates and encouraging participants to go to college. But it would not do so in sufficient numbers to affect the educational prospects for other students. Even if all eligible DREAM Act students were to attend college, they would only amount to approximately 2 percent of all college students. Most would attend community colleges, which have open enrollment. The small numbers of students who attend 4-year universities are not significant enough to affect the opportunities of others.

The impact that the DREAM Act would have on educational attainment is the principle reason that educational institutions overwhelmingly support the DREAM Act. The bill is supported by well-established educational organizations like the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the American Association of Community Colleges, the National Educators Association, The College Board, and prominent university presidents and chancellors.

**FACT: The DREAM Act is a revenue generating measure.**

The CBO and the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) estimates that the bill will reduce deficits by approximately \$1.4 billion over the next ten years. But that figure alone underestimates the enormous benefits to taxpayers because the CBO and JCT do not take into account the increased income that DREAM Act participants will earn due to their legal status and educational attainment. It is estimated that the average DREAM Act participant will make \$1 million over his or her lifetime simply by obtaining legal status, which will bring hundreds of thousands of additional dollars per individual for federal, state, and local treasuries.