



D.R.E.A.M Act 101

The **D**evelopment, **R**elief, and
Education for **A**lien **M**inors Act



Background

- Each year, 65,000 undocumented students graduate from U.S. high schools.
- Through no fault of their own, they face unique barriers in their academic, personal, and professional lives.



Who are these undocumented students?

- FACT: They are NOT all Latinos- they come from many countries.
- FACT: They were brought to the U.S. at a very young age.
- FACT: They came to this country with their parents and have been raised here just like their U.S citizen classmates.
- FACT: Some may be high achievers who have excelled academically throughout their schooling.
- FACT: Many may not even realize they are here in violation of immigration laws.



Barriers Undocumented Students Face

- Students may feel a sense of hopelessness and helplessness because their legal status does not allow them to reach their full potential.
- Current immigration laws limit opportunities to legalize their residency status. There are no legal mechanisms to regularize their situation.
- They live in fear of being detected and deported by immigration authorities.
- These students are unable to obtain financial aid (grants, scholarships, loans, etc.) from an institution of higher education.



Barriers (continued...)

- Students are unable to pursue academic careers that require state licensing, background checks or Social Security Numbers (nursing, law, teaching, etc.). They are unable to apply for any job. They are unable to accept paid internships or qualify for on-campus student employment.
- They are unable to work in the chosen professional field after graduation.
- They are unable to join the U.S. Armed Forces and serve our country.



BREAKING THE BARRIERS: THE D.R.E.A.M ACT



D.R.E.A.M Act - Basics



- A **bi-partisan legislation** at the federal level
- Sponsored by Senators :
 - Richard Durbin (D-IL),
 - Chuck Hagel (R-NE)
 - Richard Lugar (R-IN)
- Sponsored by Representatives:
 - Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL)
 - Howard Berman (D-CA)
 - Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
- Has been introduced in the **Senate as S.774**, and in the **House of Representatives as H.R 1275**



D.R.E.A.M Act Requirements

- **Age:** immigrant students must have entered the U.S. before age 16
- **Academic:** Student must have been accepted for admission into a two- year or four-year institution of higher education or have earned a high school diploma or a general educational development (GED) certificate.

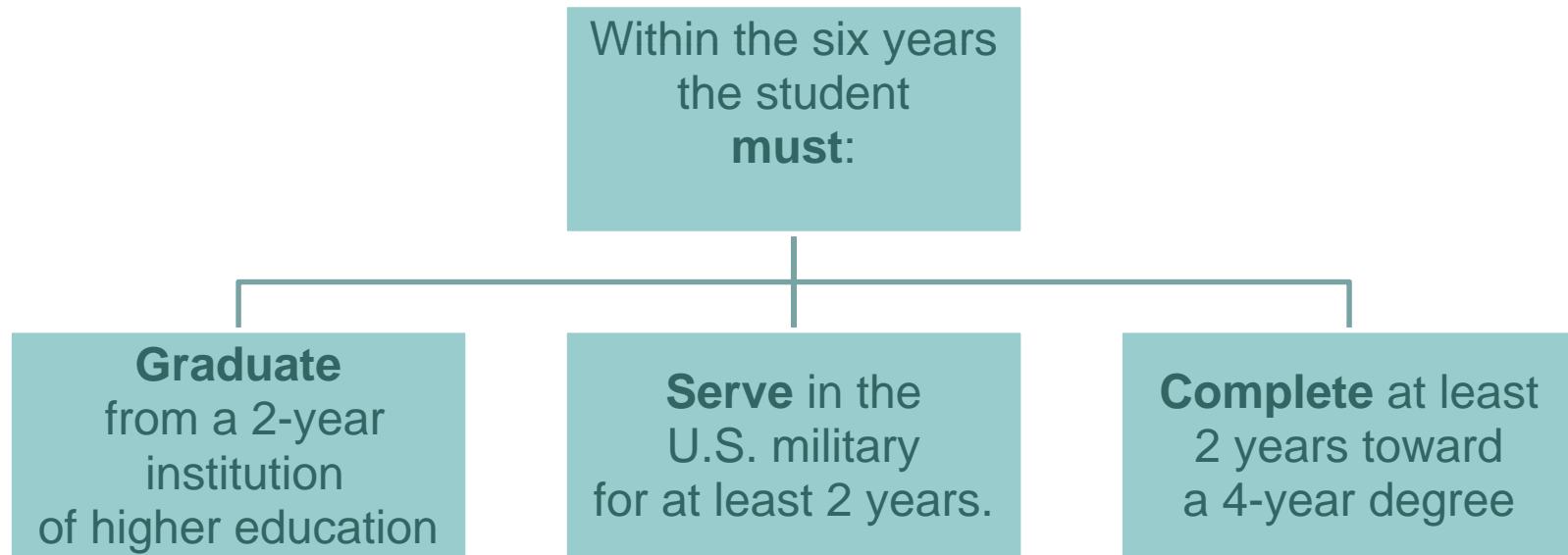


D.R.E.A.M Act Requirements Cont.

- **Long-term U.S. residence:** Students must reside in the U.S. when the law is enacted. In addition, those eligible must have lived in the U.S. for at least five years preceding the date of enactment of the Act.
- **Good moral character:** Immigrant students must demonstrate good moral character, as defined in immigration law. In general, students must have no criminal background.



If requirements are met,
the student can apply for conditional status,
which would last up to six years





Misconceptions

MYTH: The D.R.E.A.M Act would provide an incentive for people to come here illegally.

FACT: The D.R.E.A.M Act is narrowly tailored- The D.R.E.A.M Act provides ZERO benefit for immigrants who are not already here. In order to qualify for D.R.E.A.M Act benefits, the student must have been in the U.S. at least five years prior to the enactment of the act.

MYTH: The D.R.E.A.M Act is an amnesty, it would reward people who came here illegally.

FACT: The D.R.E.A.M Act is NOT amnesty. Amnesty is forgiveness for wrongdoing. That does not apply to Dream Act students who were all brought here years ago as children. They did not make the ultimate choice to come here.



Misconceptions Cont.

MYTH: Allowing these children to adjust status would punish those immigrants who played by the rules and waited in line to become legal.

FACT: The adjustment of these children's status in no way affects other immigrant's ability or timeline to legalize. These young people gladly would have waited in line for the chance to legalize if the government had created a line for them. They have been waiting their entire lives just for this chance.



THE D.R.E.A.M Act:

Impact on

Society



The D.R.E.A.M Act would increase the tax base for state, federal, and local governments

- According to the US Department of Commerce, a high school graduate earns \$1.2 million in a 40-year span compared to **\$2.1 million** for a person with a **Bachelor's degree**. A person with a **master's degree** has an average earning of **\$2.5 million in a 40-year span** (Economics and Statistics Administration, Census Bureau. (2002) Available: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/p23-210.pdf>)
- Therefore, **a single person with a bachelor's degree who earns an average \$60,000 of taxable income will contribute \$11,564 to taxes and welfare annually; in a 40-year span he/she will have contributed \$462,560** (2006 Tax Table. Available at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/i1040tt.pdf>).



The D.R.E.A.M Act will improve national security by alleviating the recruitment shortages to the armed forces

- In April 2005 the Army Reserve and the National Guard failed **to meet their recruitment quota**. Only **51 percent** of Inactive Ready Reserve troops reported for duty.
- The army expects to reverse the recruiting shortfall **by lowering standards** (which will increase training costs), and by **adding more recruiters and spending more money on advertising**. The army is also offering larger bonuses (up to \$90,000, in one lump sum) to get existing troops to re-enlist. These methods **will increase personnel costs as much as ten percent.**^[i]
- As of 2006, 30,000 foreign-born individuals are currently serving in the armed forces. Every year, 7,200 of the 180,000 new recruits are non-citizens. Immigrants account for 20 percent of recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor.^[ii]

[i] www.strategypage.com, April 2005

[ii] American Immigration Law Foundation. (2006) Defending America: Immigrants Fight for Our Nation. Available at <http://www.aifl.org/pubed/defendingamerica.shtml>



The D.R.E.A.M Act would help alleviate a labor shortage in the United States

- Experts estimate that **America will need 5%, or 15.6 million, more workers by 2015** to maintain the current ratio of workers to the total population.
- It would **reduce the cost of recruiting foreign professionals**, as processing times for visas range from one to three years, not including the time spent for acculturation and learning the language.



The D.R.E.A.M Act will increase global competitiveness by utilizing skilled US trained professionals already in this country instead of competing for skilled workers with other countries

President Bush has called for training 70,000 math and science teachers to improve US competitiveness. [i] The D.R.E.A.M Act will help the US to be more globally competitive by resulting in an increase of graduates in the math and science sectors.

[i] "A stiff learning curve," Asia Times February 14, 2006



The DREAM Act will increase global competitiveness...cont.

H-1Bs are visas with a limited yearly quota of 65,000 that are provided to highly skilled foreign nationals. These visas get allocated in less than one day every year.

Many US companies recruit engineers, computer programmers and other professionals from around the globe because of the lack of professionals in these fields in the US.

For example, Silicon Valley companies are among the main supporters of H-1B visa reform (higher quotas).

Due to the lack of available H-1Bs, companies say they are experiencing a reverse brain drain as skilled workers flock to the booming economies of China and India.

Data suggests that companies that engage in off-shoring work to India submitted H-1B visa applications in heavy volume.^[ii]

^[ii] Prithiv Patel, *Infosys, Wipro and TCS under investigation for misuse of H1B visas*, India Daily, May 15, 2007



Your Next Steps

- **Call your Congress Person Today!**
 - Call 1-866-340-9281 to connect to the Capitol switchboard. Ask them to connect you with your congressperson or senators' office.
 - Call 1-800-833-6354 , follow the instructions. Enter your zip code and it will connect you with your senator or representative.
 - Tell them you are calling to ask for their support for the Dream Act, that we need their leadership more than ever and that our nation needs the talent of the young immigrants



For more information

- Contact CADENA, Dream Act advocates in Arizona at dreamactaz@gmail.com
- Visit www.dreamactaz.org