

NEWS FROM

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U.S. REPS. HOWARD BERMAN, LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD AND LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART INTRODUCE “THE AMERICAN DREAM ACT”

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Reps. Howard Berman (CA), Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA) and Lincoln Diaz-Balart (FL) joined by a bipartisan group of original cosponsors, announced today the introduction of the “American Dream Act” which will provide a path to permanent residency for thousands of young people who have been raised here, worked hard in school, and would like to pursue higher education or serve their country in the military. These students face tremendous obstacles in reaching their potential because, through no fault of their own, they exist in a legal limbo with no way to adjust their immigration status.

“It makes no sense to me,” said Berman, “that we maintain a system that brings in thousands of highly-skilled foreign guest workers each year to fill a gap in our domestic workforce, and at the same time do nothing to provide an opportunity to kids who have grown up here, gone to school here, and want to prepare themselves for these jobs or serve their country in the military. This is the illogical outcome of our current immigration laws that the Dream Act will fix.”

“The issues addressed in the American Dream Act”, continued Berman, “are just a fraction of the problems in our immigration system. This bill came about because our immigration laws are, and have been for some time, broken. It is my great hope that we will put together a comprehensive immigration reform package that includes the Dream Act as it was introduced today, and it is my intention to work for and pass that comprehensive immigration reform package this year.”

“Our students and brave soldiers should not be punished for a decision which was made by their parents, in which they often played no role. The Supreme Court has prohibited states from barring undocumented students from attending primary and secondary

schools. Unfortunately, once these students graduate from high school, their educational aspirations are often halted,” said Rep. Diaz-Balart.

“The American Dream Act will bring much needed relief and justice to the thousands of students in our communities who, because of their immigration status, are not able to fulfill their dream of pursuing a college education,” said Rep. Roybal-Allard. “This nation cannot afford to waste the investment we have already made in these young people and inhibit their potential by denying them an opportunity for a college education.”

Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers added, "We should all be able to agree that children should not be punished ‘for the sins of the fathers.’ We should not punish them for their parents’ manner of entry or status, but should instead reward them when they succeed."

Rep. Zoe Lofgren, Chairman of the Immigration Subcommittee added, “As a nation, we face an increasingly competitive global market. To effectively compete in this new interconnected global market, we must ensure that we have the most educated workforce in the world. Whether in college or in the military, we must give all qualified young people the opportunity to get an education. These determined and dedicated young people need the chance to become productive members of our society. Penalizing them hurts us all.”

Rep. Jared Polis (CO-2) said, “For too long, promising and talented students have had their dreams of an education shattered by a system that doesn’t take into account good grades and hard work. The DREAM Act is an affirmation of the values that Americans are raised with. We are taught that if you work hard and do not give up, you can do anything. This legislation will ensure that undocumented children who have grown up in the United States and studied in American schools can do the same.”

A companion measure has been introduced in the Senate.

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