

For Immediate Release
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March 26, 2009

DURBIN INTRODUCES BIPARTISAN DREAM ACT TO HELP STUDENTS EARN A PATH TO LEGAL RESIDENCY

[WASHINGTON, D.C.] – Assistant Senate Majority Leader Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) today introduced the *Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act* - a narrowly tailored, bipartisan measure which would permit undocumented students to become permanent residents if they came here as children, are long-term U.S. residents, have good moral character, and attend college or enlist in the military for at least two years.

“Our immigration laws prevent thousands of young people from fully contributing to our nation’s future. These young people have lived in this country for most of their lives. It is the only home they know. They are American in every sense except their technical legal status,” said Durbin. “They are honor roll students, star athletes, talented artists and valedictorians. These children are tomorrow’s doctors, nurses, teachers, policemen, firefighters, soldiers, and senators and we should give them the opportunity to reach their full potential.”

Durbin said that due to their undocumented status, tens of thousands of immigrant students with good grades are shut out of the American dream because they cannot attend college without legal immigration status. He noted that these students had no choice in the matter because they were brought to the United States by their parents at a young age and have spent most of their lives in America.

Our current immigration laws prevent thousands of young people from pursuing their dreams and fully contributing to our nation’s future. For many, this is the only home they know. They are fully assimilated into American society and they want nothing more than to be Americans.

“We should not punish children for their parents’ mistakes. That is not the American way. The DREAM Act says to these kids: America will give you a chance. We will give you the opportunity to earn your way to legal status if you work hard and play by the rules,” Durbin said.

In order to be eligible for the DREAM Act individuals must:

- Have arrived here at the age of 15 or under;
- Have lived in the U.S. for at least 5 years;
- Graduate from high school;
- Serve in the military or attend college for at least two years; and
- Have good moral character

Additional Senate cosponsors include: Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), and Senators Martinez (R-FL), Leahy (D-VT), Lieberman (I-CT), Kennedy (D-MA) and Feingold (D-WI).

The DREAM Act is supported by a broad coalition of education, labor, civil rights and religious leaders from across the political spectrum and around the country, including the AFL-CIO, the American Federation of Teachers, the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, the Center for Community Change, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Council of La Raza, the National Education Association, the National Immigration Law Center, People for the American Way, the Service Employees International Union, and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.