



A Union of Professionals

DREAM Act: The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act

Background: There are approximately 2.5 million undocumented students in the United States who would benefit from the DREAM Act. The main provision of the act is the conditional residency status it gives undocumented students (about 65,000 such students graduate from high school each year). This status allows undocumented students access to in-state tuition (based on state law) and some forms of federal financial assistance, such as student loans and work study. Students have a period of six years to either graduate from a two-year community college, complete at least two years toward a four-year degree or serve two years in the U.S. military.

The DREAM Act specifically is designed to help undocumented students who:

- were brought to the United States before the age of 16;
- have lived in the U.S. for at least five years;
- have demonstrated good moral character;
- have graduated from high school or obtain a GED; and
- are under the age of 35.

Status: The DREAM Act was reintroduced in the Senate (S. 952) on May 11, 2011, by Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) and in the House of Representatives (H.R. 1842) by Howard Berman (D-Calif.), Illeana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) and Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-Calif.).

AFT's Position: The AFT is fully committed to passage of the DREAM Act, which would help approximately 2.5 million young people have access to higher education as well as provide them with the opportunity to contribute fully in our society and strengthen the communities in which they work and live. The DREAM Act is good for our economy, for our society, and for our democracy.

The AFT has been very active in supporting passage of the DREAM Act and has issued a number of resolutions in support of the act and comprehensive immigration reform:

In 2003, it was resolved that the AFT support legislative efforts to establish state policies granting in-state tuition to undocumented students (particularly in states with high levels of immigration) who are living in the U.S. legally, in the process of legalizing their immigration status, or have expressed a willingness to legalize their status once they are able.

In 2006, it was resolved that the AFT work with the AFL-CIO and the NEA, and with our affiliated unions and coalition partners representing the immigrant, ethnic, faith and civil rights communities to ensure that comprehensive immigration legislation that provides a path toward earned legalization and the enforcement of workplace rights for all workers is introduced in Congress and signed into law.

In 2010, it was resolved that the AFT work with labor and our community partners to call on Congress to pass commonsense, compassionate and comprehensive immigration reform that protects all workers from abuse and exploitation, recognizes the hardships and contributions of immigrants who have made America their home, keeps families together, expands opportunities for DREAMers to go to college, and creates a road map to citizenship for aspiring Americans.