



WASHINGTON BUREAU · NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
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ISSUE UPDATE / ACTION ALERT

URGENT!
Senate vote
THIS WEEK

DATE: December 13, 2010

TO: Concerned Parties

FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director, NAACP Washington Bureau

NAACP-SUPPORTED “DREAM ACT” LEGISLATION PASSES U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES; FIGHT MOVES TO THE SENATE *LEGISLATION SYMBOLIZES WHAT AMERICA IS MEANT TO BE ALL ABOUT – IT REWARDS HARD WORK AND A COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY WITH A PATH TO DOCUMENTED STATUS*

THE ISSUE:

On Wednesday, December 8 by a vote of 216 to 198, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 5481, the DREAM Act which would allow young people, many of whom have lived in the United States most of their lives would have an opportunity to enlist in the military or go to college and have a path to documented status which they otherwise would not have without this legislation. The bill must now be passed by the US Senate so it can go to President Obama for his signature.

Currently, people who entered the country without documentation, regardless of their age at the time of entry, how long they have lived in the United States or their behavior or accomplishments since living the United States, potentially face deportation at any time. Normally a child brought into the country without immigration visas, would have to first leave the US in order to apply for a visa. Returning to their country of birth would not guarantee a path to a visa. Attempts to return are often difficult, with roadblocks such as three- to ten-year bans on reentering the U.S.

To address this quagmire, the bipartisan “Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors Act”, also called the DREAM Act would allow young people, many of whom have lived in the United States most of their lives would have an opportunity to enlist in the military or go to college and have a path to documented status. In order to qualify under the DREAM Act, an individual must have entered the United States before the age of 16 (i.e. 15 and younger); must have been present in the United States for at least five (5) consecutive years prior to enactment of the bill; must have graduated from a United States high school, or have obtained a GED, or have been accepted into an institution of higher education (i.e. college/university); must be between the ages of 12 and 35 at the time of application; and must demonstrate “good moral character” (in other words, not gotten into trouble with the law, must have members of the community, teachers, etc, who are willing to vouch for their character, etc).

If enacted, the DREAM Act will allow tens of thousands of young people – people who have worked hard, integrated themselves into the American culture and into American communities and stayed away from trouble – to fulfill their dream and the dreams of their parents. This in turn will allow them to go to college or serve in the US military. The DREAM Act symbolizes what America is meant to be all about – it rewards hard work and a commitment to the community with a path toward documented status. There are still too many young men and women who are preparing to go into their future with too much uncertainty. At a time when they should be celebrating and looking towards an exciting future full of promise and hope, they are instead faced with limitations due entirely to a broken immigration system that does not care, frankly, if they are an honor student, a star athlete, a member of the state champion debating team, or a typical student who has worked hard and stayed out of trouble. The DREAM Act would change that, and reward these young men and women for their hard work and their strength of character which has guided them to this point in their lives. The DREAM Act is good for our economy, our security, and our nation. It's limited, targeted legislation that will allow only the best and brightest young people to earn their legal status after a rigorous and lengthy process, and applies to those brought to the United States as minors by their parents, and who know no other home.

More...

THE ACTION WE NEED YOU TO TAKE:

Contact both your Senators and **URGE THEM TO SUPPORT THE DREAM ACT.** To contact your Senators, you may:

✓ **Make a Phone Call:**

Call your Senators in Washington by dialing the Capitol Switchboard and asking to be transferred to your Senators' offices. The switchboard phone number is **(202) 224-3121** (see message section, below).

**No time to
mail a
letter!
Call, fax or
e-mail
today!**

Write a Letter

To write letters to your Senators, send them to:
The Honorable (name of Senator)
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

**A SAMPLE LETTER
IS ATTACHED**

✓ **Send a Fax**

If you would like to send a fax, call your Senators' offices (through the Capitol switchboard) and ask for their fax numbers (you can use either the attached sample letter or the message box, below).

✓ **Send an E-Mail**

To send an e-mail to your Senators, go to www.senate.gov; click on "*Find Your Senators*". Look up your Senators by state; go to their web sites for e-mail addresses.

REMEMBER TO CONTACT BOTH YOUR SENATORS!!!!

THE MESSAGE

- The DREAM Act would reward undocumented young men and women for their hard work and their strength of character which has guided them to this point in their lives with the opportunity to get on the track to documentation and documented status.
- The DREAM Act is good for our economy, our security, and our nation by allowing these hardworking young people the opportunity to be recognized by our government.
- The DREAM Act is limited, targeted legislation that will allow only the best and brightest young people to earn their legal status after a rigorous and lengthy process, and applies to those brought to the United States as minors through no fault of their own by their parents, and who know no other home.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS IMPORTANT MATTER!!!

If you have any questions, call Hilary Shelton at the Washington Bureau at (202) 463-2940.

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Sample Letter

(date)

The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510 / 20515

RE: SUPPORT FOR PASSAGE OF H.R. 5481, THE *DEVELOPMENT, RELIEF, AND EDUCATION FOR ALIEN MINORS (DREAM) ACT* DURING THE LAME DUCK SESSION

Dear Senator _____;

As your constituent, I strongly urge you to support H.R. 5481, the *Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act*, and to push hard for its passage by the United States Senate during the lame duck session. H.R. 5481, the DREAM Act is but one example of changes to our immigration laws that can and should be made for the betterment of our communities, of our Nation, and to extend the promise of America to young men and women who have fallen through the cracks created by a broken immigration system.

If enacted, the DREAM Act will allow tens of thousands of young people – people who have worked hard, integrated themselves into the American culture and into American communities and stayed away from trouble – the opportunity to fulfill their aspirations and those of their parents and to become documented Americans. H.R. 5481, the DREAM Act symbolizes what America is meant to be all about – it rewards hard work and a commitment to the community.

Again, I urge you to allow these young men and women to celebrate their accomplishments, contributions and their outstanding behavior by beginning the clear process of becoming documented. Thank you in advance for your attention my concerns; I look forward to hearing from you in the near future as to what you are doing to promote the DREAM Act and what I can do to help.

Sincerely,

(sign and print your name and
remember to include your address)

**Remember to contact
BOTH your Senators.**