November 29, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Reid:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I applaud your leadership on the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act and urge you to bring this legislation to the House and Senate floor as soon as possible. The DREAM Act would allow individuals who were brought to this country at a young age to legalize their status by serving in the military or pursuing a higher education.

Every year, thousands of our nation's brightest and best students graduating high school find that the path to decent jobs and the doors of higher education and the military are shut tight for one reason alone: they lack legal immigration status because as young children they were brought to this country by their parents. These children have grown up in the United States, attended local schools, and demonstrated a sustained commitment to succeed in our educational system, but immigration laws provide no avenue for them to become legal residents. Instead of being allowed to continue to excel in college as they have in high school, these promising children will be forced into jobs where they will have to either lie about their status or work off the books. Our nation has already made an investment in the education of these students, and forcing them into the underground economy is a tragic and wasteful loss of human capital.
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The DREAM Act would remedy this situation by allowing undocumented students who have lived in the United States for at least five years and graduated from high school or received a graduate equivalency diploma (GED) to legalize their immigration status by pursuing a college education or serving in the U.S. military. Access to higher education would allow these immigrants to make even greater contributions to our society and decrease the numbers of those forced to live in poverty.

As you may know, on August 5, 2010 the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO passed a resolution calling on Congress to take immediate steps to pass the DREAM Act this year as a down payment on comprehensive immigration reform.

We urge you to schedule a vote on the DREAM Act as soon as possible. The time to act is now.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Richard L. Trumka
President

RLT/AD/nm