

# THE DREAM ACT:

## Good for Illinois' Economy; Good for Illinois' Future

---

December 2010

The Development Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act (S. 729; H.R. 1751) is a bipartisan bill that would give undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as young children a path toward legal status if they attend college or serve in the military. For many of these young people, the U.S. is the only home they know, and English is their first language. They have the potential to be future doctors, nurses, teachers, and entrepreneurs. The DREAM Act would provide an opportunity for them to live up to their full potential and make greater contributions to the U.S. economy and society.

### ■ The DREAM Act will boost Illinois' economic recovery.

- The State of Illinois is currently struggling with a \$13 billion deficit. The DREAM Act will help reduce Illinois' deficit by increasing tax revenues.
- A conservative estimate finds that the average DREAM Act beneficiary student will earn \$1 million more over his or her lifetime simply by obtaining legal status. Each DREAM student's earnings will net tens of thousands of additional dollars in taxes for state and local treasuries.

### ■ Illinois is one of the top beneficiaries of the DREAM Act.

- Approximately 95,000 students – or 4 percent of all potential DREAM beneficiaries in the country– live in Illinois. Every beneficiary of the DREAM Act will be a college or military-bound high school graduate.
- The average college graduate earns over 60 percent more than the average high school graduate over his or her lifetime. According to the Internal Revenue Service, a typical single person who graduates with a bachelor's degree makes an average annual salary of \$60,000 and will generate about \$11,194 in tax revenue every year.
- If only half of Illinois' DREAM students attain a bachelor's degree, they will generate over \$531 million in tax revenue for Illinois a year (\$11,194 X 47,500 DREAM students).

### ■ The DREAM Act invests in Illinois' future.

- Illinois DREAM students have been raised and educated in the state, and taxpayers have already invested in the elementary and secondary education of these children. DREAM students are fully assimilated into the American way of life and are ready to give back to the state they consider home.
- Only 5-10 percent of undocumented high school graduates go to college. The DREAM Act would create a strong incentive for undocumented students to remain in school until graduation. Some of these students will go on to pursue careers like teaching and nursing, thereby helping to resolve the state's rising demand for such positions.

### ■ The DREAM Act gives Illinois back the right to determine in-state tuition eligibility for Illinois residents.

- Federal law attempts to deny Illinois' ability to determine eligibility for in-state tuition by stating that if the state provides in-state tuition to undocumented state residents who graduated from Illinois high schools, it must provide the same benefit to out-of-state residents who graduated from Illinois high schools.

- Illinois has made a decision to enable all residents, regardless of immigration status, to pay in-state tuition because state policymakers understand that this policy increases school revenues by securing tuition from students who otherwise might not go to college.
- The DREAM Act will restore Illinois' authority and choice to provide in-state tuition to all of its residents penalty-free.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT**

Adey Fisseha, Policy Attorney, National Immigration Law Center | [fisseha@nilc.org](mailto:fisseha@nilc.org) | 202.216.0261