



September 24, 2010

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), the national agency established by Lutheran churches in the United States to carry out the churches' ministry with uprooted people, I write to urge your support of S. 729 / H.R. 1751, the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act of 2009 (DREAM Act).

I recently met with LIRS's national Asylum & Immigration Network and heard them speak passionately about the importance of this bipartisan legislation. This amazing group of advocates and legal service providers are on the front lines of seeking just solutions for newcomers to this nation. The DREAM Act would allow undocumented students who came to the United States as children, who are long-term U.S. residents, and have good moral character to become lawful permanent residents provided that for two years they attend college or serve in the U.S. military.

America's greatness has been built on the hard work of generations of newcomers who have cherished education, committed themselves to hard work and excellence, and have returned many fold great benefits to our society and local communities. The students who will benefit from the DREAM Act should have the opportunity to continue to pursue their education, to work and to earn a path to citizenship in the United States. Furthermore, they should be protected from being returned to a country they do not know.

LIRS continues to support comprehensive immigration reform and the imperative of building welcome in every city, town, workplace, school and place of worship. However, in the absence of an immigration reform overhaul, LIRS stands ready to work with Congress and the Administration to ensure the passage of this important legislation.

I urge you to support the passage of the DREAM Act. We would welcome any questions about our work and support for the DREAM Act. Please feel free to contact Eric B. Sigmon, Director for Advocacy at (202) 626-7943 or via email at esigmon@lirs.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda J. Hartke", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Linda Hartke
President and CEO, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service