

December 6, 2010

Dear Member of Congress,

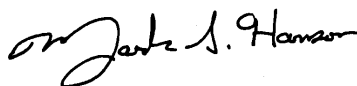
As presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, I write to urge your support of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act of 2009 (DREAM Act). The DREAM Act is bipartisan legislation that will allow undocumented students who came to the United States as children, who are long-term U.S. residents, and have good moral character to obtain lawful permanent residency, provided that for two years they attend college or serve in the U.S. military.

The ELCA cannot welcome people into the church without caring about their lives, their concerns and their experiences as newcomers in this country. The ELCA has therefore repeatedly affirmed the biblical witness and our shared experience, culminating in an affirmation by the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge reform of the nation's current immigration policy.

The ELCA continues to support fair and compassionate comprehensive immigration reform. Recognizing the time remaining in 2010, I urge you to pass the DREAM Act as soon as possible.

America has been built by the hard work of generations of newcomers who have cherished education, committed themselves to hard work, and have returned great benefits to our society, churches and local communities. The children who would benefit from the DREAM Act are talented, intelligent and dedicated young persons who were brought to the United States as young children. They should have the opportunity to continue to pursue their educations, to work, to earn a path to citizenship in the United States and be protected from being returned to a country they do not know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark S. Hanson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" being more prominent and the last name "Hanson" following in a similar style.

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America