City of Philadelphia

Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 090417)

RESOLUTION

Calling on the Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation to support the 2009 DREAM Act, and Recognizing the 2009 Federal DREAM Act for the Support it Provides to The Nation’s Student Immigrant Community.

WHEREAS, Senator Richard Durbin and Representative Howard Berman have introduced the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act; and

WHEREAS, Universities and Institutions of Higher Learning within Philadelphia strive to make Higher Education accessible to all who merit and desire a college experience; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia benefits from providing a quality education to the growing immigrant population; and

WHEREAS, Every year over 65,000 high school students are unable to access collegiate education either due to the legal status of their parents or guardians, or due to the financial barriers that exist around higher education; and

WHEREAS, The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act would provide high-achieving high school students who are undocumented, and who wish to either serve and protect The United States of America in the armed forces, or improve their quality of life through college education, a temporary legal status to achieve those goals; and

WHEREAS, The opportunity for all Philadelphia high school students to attend Institutions of Higher Education is of paramount importance to the success of The City of Philadelphia, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and The United States of America; now, therefore, be it
RESOLUTION NO. 090417 continued

RESOLVED THAT, The Philadelphia City Council supports the passage of the 2009 Federal DREAM Act, and calls on The Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation to support The 2009 Federal Dream Act, and to continuously support all students who struggle to achieve the dream of higher education. We recognize the significance of increasing the accessibility of education, and support the 2009 DREAM Act for its mission to make the dream of a college education a reality.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution shall be transmitted to all members of the Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation.
City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 090417 continued
City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 090417 continued

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the fourteenth of May, 2009.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Patricia Rafferty
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Sanchez, Reynolds Brown, Blackwell and Green

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Sanchez, Reynolds Brown, Blackwell, Green, Greenlee, Jones, Goode and DiCicco
Dream Resolution
Support for Undocumented High School Graduates to Pursue their Dreams
Author by Chris Range, Inigo Rumayor, Chris Cruz, Nigel Lam, Vanessa Romero, Ollin Venegas, Mark Pan, Rosie Brown, Emerson Brooking, Abe Sutton, Mo Shahin, Matt Amalfitano, Ali Huberlie, Andrew Lum, Karla Molina, Cynthia Ip, Alex Amaniel, Grant Dubler, Michael Chen

Dream Resolution
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Background

Every year, three million students graduate from high schools throughout the nation#. Of these three million students, over 65,000 are not able to attend college#. This is not because they are incompetent or unqualified, but rather because their legal status prevents them from following the path of higher education, enlisting in the military, or even being able to compete in the job market. Their status as “illegal immigrants” prevents them from living normal lives, though most have lived in the United States for as long as they can remember. For them, home is not wherever their parents are from. Home is America, and most of these students share a longing for acceptance from the only country they have ever known.

The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act) is a piece of federal legislation that was first proposed to the United States Senate on August 1st, 2001. If enacted, the bill would help students who meet a certain set of requirements gain legal status, either by serving two years in the United States Military or through the successful completion of two years of college. The DREAM Act would not only benefit the thousands of undocumented high school graduates, but would also be beneficial to the nation as a whole in that these students would legally be able to give back to their country – an opportunity denied to many.

The requirements for eligibility under the DREAM Act are as follows:

1. Must have been in the United States before the age of 16.
2. Must have been in the United States for at least five consecutive years prior to the bill’s enactment.
3. Must have graduated from a United States high school, or have earned a GED, or have been accepted into an institution of higher education (i.e. a college or university).
4. Must be between the ages of 12 and 35 at the time of application.
5. Must have good moral character.

An undocumented individual who meets the above qualifications must do the following to be eventually eligible for citizenship:
1. Apply for the DREAM Act. Since the bill has not been passed, there are not yet specific guidelines on how to apply.

2. Once approved, the individual will have Conditional Permanent Residency and must either:
   a. Enroll in an institution of higher education in order to pursue a bachelor’s or higher degree.
   b. Enlist in the United States Military

3. Within six years of the approval of Conditional Permanent Residency, the individual must have attained a degree of higher education or completed at least two years of either option enumerated above.

4. Once five and a half of the six years have passed, the individual will then be able to apply for Legal Permanent Residency.

Rationale for UA Involvement

As one of the goals of the Undergraduate Assembly is to support diversity and foster tolerance at Penn, we believe that the enactment of the following proposal would further this goal. Diversity is not confined to race, ethnicity, and orientation; it includes the recognition that people come from a variety of life experiences. We accept qualified students from all over the world and from all socio-economic backgrounds for this reason. A student who is undocumented, even if he or she is not open about his or her legal status, brings new perspectives to both classroom discussion and dialogue in the dorms. By including these individuals who are just as academically qualified as the rest of us, we are not only extending them the opportunity to obtain the education they worked so hard toward in high school, we are also enriching the experience for all of us.

Many students have expressed interest in the UA’s collaboration on this issue. The Daily Pennsylvanian editorial board wrote a piece on November 9th urging both the UA and Amy Gutmann to take a proactive stance towards education for undocumented students (“Editorial | Time to DREAM”). Last year, the five boards (APSC, Lambda Alliance, Latino Coalition, UMC, UMOJA) and MEChA de Penn asked Amy Gutmann to write a letter to our district’s Congressman and the Senators of Pennsylvania. The authors commend President Gutmann for her support, but also feel that the student perspective expressed in the letter below complements the letter previously sent by Dr. Gutmann.

Educational reform that directly affects how past, current and future students at Penn interact on Penn’s campus is being discussed now. By writing this letter, we ensure that our voices as students are added to the debate in a way that has a possibility of creating tangible change.

Goals of This Letter

1. Ensure that graduates of institutions in higher education can use their education to pursue a better life in the United States.

2. Create an educational environment that supports diversity and acceptance.

3. Push for an educational atmosphere in the U.S. that allows for all competent and willing students to pursue an education at an institution of higher learning.

4. Ensure that federal financial assistance be available for all students in the United States who need it.
Enactment

The Undergraduate Assembly hereby:

1. Supports the breakdown of educational barriers to achieve the goals outlined above.
2. Commends President Amy Gutmann for her advocacy on behalf of current and future students who would be affected by the DREAM Act.
3. Recognizes and appreciates the breadth of political perspectives among the student body of the University of Pennsylvania.
4. Emphasizes the distinction between advocacy of specific legislation and advocacy in support of current and future student communities.
5. Recognizes that the undocumented population at Penn enriches the education experience for all by adding a diversity of life experience to the student body.
6. Signs and sends a letter of support to the Representatives and Senators of Pennsylvania, adding a student perspective on the issue to complement the letter already sent by President Amy Gutmann.
7. Calls upon the Representatives and Senators of Pennsylvania to support the values outlined in this letter.
8. Strongly urges President Amy Gutmann to continue advocacy efforts among our peer institutions.

Appendix I: Letter of Support to Congressmen/Senators

Dear Sen. Robert Casey
Sen. Arlen Specter
Sen. Elect Pat Toomey
Rep. Chaka Fattah,

As the Undergraduate Assembly of the University of Pennsylvania, which represents approximately 10,000 students, we hereby express our support for the removal of barriers to higher education included in the Development, Relief, and Education of Alien Minors Act.

As student representatives, this issue is important to us because it affects our constituents. Every year, 65,000 undocumented students graduate from our nation's high schools. Some of these students attend Penn and many others are qualified to do so: they could be our classmates, friends, and neighbors. As college students, we recognize the value of higher education in a person's life, especially because higher education and more specialized skills are becoming increasingly necessary to be competitive in today's society. We feel that dedicated students in good moral standing deserve the opportunity to enroll in an institution of higher education. Yet, a significant number of our peers are denied this opportunity. These students did not have agency in their immigration to this country; however, they have grown up in this country and consider themselves to be American. As our university's President, Dr. Amy Gutmann, stated in a letter last year:
“The DREAM Act will remove barriers to higher education for thousands of young students who have grown up in this country, attended our schools, and have the desire and capacity to make vital contributions to the nation’s future economic strength and security. For many of these students, the U.S. is the only country they have known, and we need them to contribute to our economy to the full extent of their abilities.”

As a country that prides itself on being a land of opportunity, we should remember that these students are an asset to the development of our nation. When considering the DREAM ACT, please remember students attempting to realize the American Dream.

Sincerely,
The Undergraduate Assembly of the University of Pennsylvania

Appendix II: Statements in Support of the DREAM Act by University Student Governments

Google Map of Endorsements by University Administrations and Student Governments

- Change.org: Temple University Supports DREAM Act (2009.04.29)
  - “The student government of Temple University here in Philadelphia recently passed a resolution in support of the DREAM Act.”
  - United States Student Association: “Eastern Michigan University Student Government Supports DREAM Act”
- New Mexico Daily Lobo [University of New Mexico]: “ASUNM [Associated Students of the University of NMI] passes DREAM Act resolution with no contest” (2009.12.03)
- Florida State University Student Government Association
  - 2010.02.24 Senate Minutes: Passage with Objections of Resolution 27: “Supporting the Dream Act”
  - dreamactivist.org: Resolution in Support of the DREAM Act (2009.09)
- University of Central Florida Student Body Senate: Resolution 42-11 (2010.01-2010-02)
  - dreamactivist.org: Text of Resolution in .doc format
  - Orlando Sentinel: “UCF Students making a statement on immigration” (2010.01.26)
  - dreamact.info: “Story of UCF’s DREAM Resolution” (2010.05.19)