

July 25, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the American Council on Education and the undersigned higher education associations, I write in support of the Dream Act of 2017. We are pleased that Senator Dick Durbin and Senator Lindsey Graham have reintroduced this important legislation in a bipartisan manner and we urge the Senate to pass it as soon as possible.

The Dream Act would allow some undocumented young people, who have already invested in our country and in whom the country has already invested, to earn lawful permanent residence in the United States. Brought to our country as children, many of these individuals do not even remember the country they came from and consider America to be their only home. Through no fault of their own, they are unable to pursue their dreams and contribute more fully to our nation.

First, the legislation would establish eight-year conditional permanent residency status for those who were brought to this country as minors, have been here at least four years as of the enactment date, graduate from a U.S. high school, obtain a GED credential or been admitted to higher education, and meet other requirements. They also cannot have committed a felony or other serious crimes and do not pose a threat to our national security or public safety. Dream-eligible individuals may qualify for permanent residency after eight years by completing at least two years of higher education or military service, or having worked lawfully for at least 3 years.

Second, the Dream Act would restore the ability of states to grant in-state tuition to undocumented students on the basis of residency, though it does not require them to take any particular action in this area. This provision, in combination with the rest of the bill, serves as an important tool for achieving our national goal of returning the United States to world leadership in higher education attainment. It has been estimated that 65,000 Dream-eligible students graduate from American high schools each year.

This bill is designed to focus on the special case of undocumented young people who came to this country because of the actions of their parents. They are educated, English-speaking, and aptly suited to contribute to our nation. They grew up with American values

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and traditions, making them American in virtually every way except for their immigration status.

These individuals often have to overcome significant barriers to graduate from high school, and we cannot afford to stymie their aspirations to continue their education and contribute to our economy and society.

We strongly urge you to advance this important legislation so that the Senate can quickly pass the Dream Act before the end of the year.

Sincerely,



Terry W. Hartle
Senior Vice President

TWH/ldw

On behalf of:

American Association of Colleges for Teachers Education
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
American Dental Education Association
American Indian Higher Education Consortium
Association of American Universities
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Research Libraries
College and University Professional Association for Human Resources
Council for Advancement and Support for Education
Council for Christian Colleges and Universities
Council for Opportunity in Education
Council of Graduate Schools
Council of Independent Colleges
Educational Testing Service
EDUCAUSE
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

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NAFSA: Association of International Educators

NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

National Association for College Admission Counseling

National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education

National Association of College and University Business Officers

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

National Collegiate Athletic Association

National Council for Community and Education Partnerships