

State Lawmakers from Critical States Speak Out in Favor of DREAM Act

As U.S. Senate Prepares to Vote, State Lawmakers Urge Passage

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Washington D.C. - Today, a group of state legislators from **Colorado, Massachusetts, Maine, Texas, and Utah** participated in a briefing to share their support for federal legislation known as the DREAM Act. The bi-partisan DREAM Act passed the House of Representatives and awaits a final vote in the Senate in the days ahead. The DREAM Act offers undocumented students the opportunity to gain legal status after completing two years of college or military service, in addition to other requirements. The Migration Policy Institute [estimates](#) [1] that 755,000 of the 1.9 million eligible unauthorized immigrants would likely satisfy the DREAM Act's postsecondary or military requirements and obtain legal permanent status.

The state legislators convened by [Progressive State Action](#) [2] and the [Immigration Policy Center](#) [3] discussed what's at stake for their individual states, how the DREAM Act would benefit local communities, and why they are strongly urging their U.S. Senators to vote in favor of the bill.

State Representative Diane Russell of Maine said "Passing the DREAM Act is a great example of a common sense proposal. It expands opportunity for all our residents - a goal that I know resonates with many Maine voters, including my colleagues in the U.S. Senate. We should not be punishing young people for their parent's decision to come to this country illegally. That said, we do need to find a realistic way to bring those young people into the fold and onto the books without "getting ahead of the line." The DREAM Act is precisely the kind of common sense policy that would do so that is good for Maine's economy, its residents and our communities."

State Representative Jessica Farrar of Texas enhanced the need for the DREAM Act particularly in Texas where in-state tuition for kids is under attack. Farrar said "In our last election, a super majority of Republicans were elected. Their number one target has been the repeal of in-state tuition. Now, I feel like the repeal will pass. I'm very concerned because education promotes assimilation and provides opportunities for students ... I want to ask Senators Cornyn and Hutchison why we would walk away from the opportunity to develop medical researchers, entrepreneurs, scientists and educators?"

State Representative Denise Provost of Massachusetts said "Immigrants have added tremendous value to our state. Massachusetts has invested heavily in K-12 education. We're investing in every student. But because federal immigration law is so outmoded and in need of change, we're prevented from benefiting from the investment we have in our students. We produce way too many valedictorians who have no future. The DREAM Act is something that would benefit our state. Massachusetts needs that workforce and the military could use the help."

State Senator Luz Robles of Utah said "The country will agree that criminalizing children is not the way we run our country, it doesn't reflect our culture or who we are as a nation...Any individual in this country who wants an opportunity to continue to grow and be a taxpayer should get that opportunity and that's what the DREAM Act does. It recognizes that they're here and it recognizes that they're a great source of revenue for our states. More importantly, they are the future of this country."

State Representative Joe Miklosi of Colorado said "It doesn't make sense to invest 12 years of

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education and then say we're going to stop after they graduate. I can't think of why we would stop professional development. It just doesn't seem to make economic sense... In Colorado, we want to continue our job growth, but in order to keep that momentum, we need to expand educational opportunities to more people and give the undocumented the ability to pay their own way. It's a win-win for everyone."

Listen to the Telebriefing:

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[1] <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/DREAM-Update-December2010.pdf>

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