

The Illinois DREAM Act

(SB 2185—Sen. Cullerton, Rep. Acevedo)

Initial Co-Sponsors: Martinez, Silverstein, Nekritz, Lang, Turner, Dunkin, Gabel, Zalewski, Burke, Mendoza, Hernandez, Garrett, Gabel, Mayfield, Currie

For 10 years, universities, business leaders, community groups, and immigrants have urged Congress to pass the DREAM Act. DREAM would enable undocumented students – brought to the US as children – to earn legal status by continuing their education or serving in the military. Roughly **95,000 Illinois youths** would have benefited from DREAM. Congress fell short of passing DREAM in December 2010.

While the State of Illinois cannot offer these students legal status, we can and should take small steps to ensure that everyone in our state has an opportunity to learn. That's why we are proposing the *Illinois DREAM Act*.

Here's what the Illinois DREAM Act Would Do

NOTE: NO NEW STATE DOLLARS WILL BE USED by this bill. The Scholarship is private dollars; drivers certificates funded by fees; volunteer commission will handle educating counselors.

- ✓ **Good information.** DREAM youths too often get incorrect information from high school counselors and college admissions officers regarding their college options. This bill would encourage these counselors and officers receive **regular training regarding educational opportunities for immigrant youths**. Having accurate information would give DREAM youths the hope they need to continue their educations and help reduce the rates of high school dropouts.
- ✓ **Education Access.** Many qualified DREAM students do not have the financial resources to pursue college—and as a result their talents are wasted. An estimated 65% of DREAM youths come from households that earn below 200% of the poverty line. The Illinois DREAM Act would establish a privately-funded **Illinois DREAM Fund**, administered by a **volunteer state commission**, to make scholarships available to undocumented students at no cost to taxpayers. The bill would also **open up college savings programs and prepaid tuition programs** to *all* Illinois residents, so that the families of DREAM students will be better able to pay for tuition.
- ✓ **Driver's Certificates.** To enable DREAM students to get to and from school, the Illinois DREAM Act would enable them to get driver's certificates. These certificates would have the added benefit of getting these youths tested and insured, reducing the number of uninsured drivers and reducing insurance rates for other drivers.
- ✓ **Illinois DREAM Commission.** In addition to administering and fundraising for the Illinois DREAM Fund, this commission would monitor implementation of other parts of this law and research the needs of DREAM youths as they make their way through college.

"It is our duty to prepare the next generation for lives of service and achievement... When one segment of our community is cut off from educational and career opportunities, it is our duty to act... We call upon our state legislators and Governor Quinn to join with us to advance an Illinois DREAM Act during this legislative session. "

- Excerpt from a joint statement issued by 9 Illinois University Presidents in favor of the Illinois DREAM Act

*More than **40 partners** statewide – community organizations, DREAM student organizations, churches, and university presidents (from **U of Illinois, Loyola, DePaul, Dominican, Roosevelt, North Park, National-Louis, and Elmhurst**) – have participated in the initial development of this new campaign.*

For more information about the Illinois DREAM Act, please contact:

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