

Washington, D.C. – Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva, the co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC), was joined by 29 other Members of Congress today in hailing Congress' first ever hearing on the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. The hearing was convened June 28 by Senator Dick Durbin (IL) before the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and Border Security.

The DREAM Act – which passed the House of Representatives last year and got 55 Senate votes but was [filibustered by Senate Republicans](#) – provides a path to conditional legal residency for an undocumented immigrant child if he or she:

- Was 15 years old or younger when brought into America
- Has lived in the United States for at least five years before enactment of the law
- Is of good moral character
- Has earned a high school degree or a graduate equivalent diploma

Eligible people would have six years to earn lawful permanent resident status if they:

- Successfully complete two years of higher education, or
- Complete two years of military service and received an honorable discharge if he or she is discharged

Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (AZ-07), CPC Co-Chair:

“I applaud the Senate for hosting this timely hearing. No one who believes in fairness and opportunity believes these students deserve to be deported. The DREAM Act presents us an opportunity to extend the American dream to a new generation of deserving individuals.

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he failure of the DREAM Act in the last Congress was not a matter of bad policy, but failed politics. The DREAM Act is important to our military readiness, our law enforcement efforts and our economic competitiveness. As the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office has reported, the DREAM Act would cut the deficit by \$2.2 billion over the next 10 years. It’s time to put the politics aside and do what is best for our country.”

Rep. Keith Ellison (MN-05), CPC Co-Chair:

“I applaud Senator Durbin for holding the Senate’s first hearing on the DREAM Act today. I have been a proud cosponsor of this legislation since I was elected to Congress in 2006. It’s high time that we give hardworking young people a fair shot at the American Dream.”

Rep. Jared Polis (CO-02), CPC Immigration Taskforce Chair:

“The DREAM Act will offer smart and patriotic young Americans an opportunity to realize their dreams through hard work, effort, and study. I applaud the Senate Judiciary Committee and Senator Leahy for moving forward with hearings on this critical legislation. While a minority of lawmakers were able to block the DREAM Act’s passage last year, this hearing is a new beginning that we all hope will end with the bill reaching the president’s desk, where I know President Obama will enthusiastically sign it into law.”

Rep. Charles Gonzalez (TX-20), Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) Chair:

“Yesterday’s hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee on this critical issue was an important step in keeping DREAM alive. *The House passed the historic legislation last year, yet the fight continues in the Senate. I urge our colleagues in the Senate, especially those who have supported the bill in the past, to heed the call of our promising and hardworking students who have only known the United States as home, to not give way to partisan games but to stand up*

for what they already know is the right thing.”

Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez (IL-04), CHC Immigration Taskforce Chair:

“Our policy on immigration is organized around the fantasy that we can or should deport all 11 million undocumented immigrants and their families, which will never happen, nor should it. The DREAM Act says we will take those with deep roots in the U.S. and who have contributed and will contribute hugely to our country out of the deportation pool so we can concentrate on serious criminals and threats. That makes our nation safer and rewards those who have stayed in school, achieved great things, and will benefit the American people.”

Rep. Judy Chu (CA-32), Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) Chair:

“Yesterday’s Senate hearing on the DREAM Act was an important and historic step in that body. Last year, the House made history when it successfully passed the DREAM Act for the first time as a standalone bill. And now, thousands of students who have grown up in the United States and worked hard to succeed have hope that the Senate will move this legislation forward.

I know how important this bill is because I taught in the Los Angeles Community College District for 20 years. I taught hundreds and hundreds of students, many of them immigrants, whose only hope for a better life was through higher education, and whose lives changed dramatically when they got a degree. The Senate should bring this bill to a vote as soon as possible.”

Rep. Mike Honda (CA-15), CAPAC Immigration Task Force Chair:

“I commend Senator Durbin for being a champion of the DREAM Act and holding this important hearing. I continue to be an ardent supporter of the DREAM Act and urge my colleagues to finally pass this bill. We should not continue to punish these students who were brought to this country at a young age. The fact that these students cannot work, receive federal funding or loans or obtain scholarships is unfair. We need to honor the work they have done in school. America has educated these youth and we need to ensure that they have the opportunity to achieve higher education or serve in the military in order to use their talent to give back to our

nation. The fact that these students cannot pursue their full educational and professional potential is detrimental to America's competitiveness."

Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (TX-15):

"In my Congressional District 15 of Deep South Texas, I have had the opportunity to hear from many of our undocumented students who were brought to the U.S. by their parents when they were very young. In many cases these children are excelling in school and have dreams, like many other children, of earning a college degree or entering military service so that they can become productive citizens of the United States of America. They know no other home but the U.S.A. and they should and must stay.

These children are caught in a legal and political situation that they knew nothing about, all the while living here and making life-long friends, and making good grades in school, while pledging their allegiance to the United States of America every day. They are already a good part of this great country. Turning our backs on them now, would be simply un-American."

Rep. Earl Blumenauer (OR-03):

"Providing children who were brought to the U.S. before their 16th birthday, and who demonstrate achievement and good moral character, the opportunity to become permanent residents will not only strengthen our economy, it comports with established American notions of basic fairness. I am proud to co-sponsor the DREAM Act and I hope this Senate hearing will help move this issue forward. Providing a path to citizenship, with benchmarks and accountability, for the best and brightest children is an area where my colleagues on both sides of the aisle can come together for the economic and educational benefit of our country."

Rep. Pedro R. Pierluisi (PR):

"I commend the Senate Judiciary Committee for holding yesterday's hearing on the DREAM Act. This legislation reflects our nation's core values and highest aspirations. It is consistent with the principle that young men and women who have worked hard and shown strong moral fiber should be given the chance to succeed. Those who would benefit from the DREAM Act have done nothing wrong and, if given the opportunity, will be of great service to our nation. Because

these youth deserve to be commended, not kept in the shadows, I am a proud supporter of this bill and intend to do all I can to achieve its enactment.”

Rep. Jan Schakowsky (IL-09):

“The Dream Act would enable young people to contribute to our economy, our military, and our country. These children, involuntarily brought here years earlier, see themselves as Americans. They should be embraced as the asset they are. To its credit Illinois has passed a limited version of the Dream Act, but now we need a national plan to address this issue comprehensively. I commend Senator Durbin’s tireless efforts to make the dream of so many young immigrants a reality.”

Rep. Hank Johnson (GA-04):

“This is common-sense, bipartisan legislation. This is not amnesty – it’s humane and decent reform that encourages all the qualities that make this country great – dedication to education, self-improvement, love of family and the honor in military service. Immigrants are fueling this country, and we should allow those who have demonstrated a commitment to hard work and a strong desire to be contributing members of our society an opportunity to obtain an education.”

Rep. Doris O. Matsui (CA-05):

“I am encouraged that the Senate is finally taking steps to expand both educational and employment opportunities for America’s youth by holding a hearing on the DREAM Act. Congress, the Democratic House passed the DREAM Act with bipartisan support because we understand we must do all that we can to see that young people who have worked to benefit our society and contribute to our nation’s wellbeing are given the opportunity to continue to give back by becoming American citizens.”

Rep. Grace F. Napolitano (CA-38):

“The students considered by the DREAM Act have excelled through hard work, have been educated in America, and should be allowed to contribute to our country. For most of them, America is their only home. It would not be fair to punish them for the actions of their parents after years of working hard and playing by the rules. These youth are the boldest and the brightest, and our nation will be stronger, safer, and more prosperous if we allow them to fully contribute to our society.”

Rep. Bob Filner (CA-51):

“I was delighted to see that Senator Durbin reintroduced the DREAM Act. We are a nation of immigrants and our laws should reflect this diversity by establishing a humane and compassionate immigration system. By giving young people the opportunity to excel, achieve and contribute to a society that they have lived in all their lives, we would be investing in the future of America. In today’s Senate hearing, we heard countless reasons why this legislation would help our country. This bill significantly addresses the deficit by increasing revenue and reducing costs, helps fill the ranks of military, creates a more skilled workforce and more importantly allows future generations the possibility of prosperity and success. The time has come to put aside the politics and pass this critical legislation!”

Rep. Mazie Hirono (HI-2):

“I applaud the Senate for holding a hearing on the DREAM Act and hope it will bring the measure to the floor for a vote. As a cosponsor of the DREAM Act in the House, I know this legislation will make a difference in the lives of young adults throughout the nation, including in Hawaii. I know of young people in Hawaii who came to this country as youngsters, didn’t know they were undocumented, now facing deportation. The DREAM Act would give these young people a chance at a better future in the only country they know, America. It is time to address these special circumstances in a fair and responsible manner.”

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18):

“Under current law, upstanding families are unfairly broken apart, and potential contributing citizens to our society are unfairly prevented from doing so. It is my hope that together we will be able to raise awareness and help educate Americans about the dangerous effects resulting

from our Nation's broken immigration policies. Until that time, our country will continue to punish educated, responsible students and families that have helped to shape our communities and protect our country. Lawmakers need to quit playing politics and do what is right: Pass the DREAM Act."

Rep. Laura Richardson (CA-37):□

"The DREAM Act will allow a limited number hard working young men and women to dedicate themselves to our country and communities, and in the process make our nation better, stronger, and safer. That is why this legislation is strongly supported by the military services, the faith community, the business community, leading higher education organizations, and thoughtful commentators on both sides of the aisle, including the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times."

Rep. Maxine Waters (CA-35):□

"Yesterday's hearing was an important step in the process to reach our shared goal, passage of the DREAM Act. We must continue to use every tool and resource available to make the opportunity for citizenship available for those who meet the common sense educational or service criteria in the Act."

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-34):□

"As an original co-author of the House-version of the DREAM Act, I join my colleagues in commending the Senate Judiciary Committee. Yesterday's hearing marks an important milestone on the path to making the American dream obtainable for all of our youth. Crossing our borders as children with their parents, the kids the DREAM Act would benefit aren't criminals and ours is the only country they have ever known. We can turn our backs on these hopeful young people and consign them to an uncertain future. Or we can pass the DREAM Act and empower them to join our children and grandchildren in building a stronger America."

Rep. David Wu (OR-01):

“Yesterday’s Senate hearing is a welcome sign that long-overdue passage of the DREAM Act may yet be possible in this Congress. I am committed to advancing the DREAM Act to give thousands of talented young people, irrespective of the acts of their parents, the chance to enrich our society and grow our economy. This nation was founded on the dream of new opportunity, and it is imperative that we continue to provide for it.”

Rep. James P. Moran (VA-08):

“Nearly a decade after introduction, the DREAM Act has yet to pass through Congress. This failure to act is a disservice to these talented young people and a detriment to our nation's economy by forcing educated potential employees out of the country. It is in our nation's best interest to ensure the best and brightest of the next generation put their skills to work here in the U.S. – by passing the DREAM Act.”

Rep. José E. Serrano (NY-16):

“As we wait for true comprehensive immigration reform, we must protect the children of our community from unjust treatment. We must protect and support them by passing the DREAM Act as soon as possible. These children are our nation’s future.”

Rep. Sam Farr (CA-17):

“I am encouraged that our colleagues in the Senate Judiciary Committee’s Subcommittee on Immigration have taken up the DREAM Act. It is time we do the right thing for the millions of youth that have worked hard to enrich their lives, and in turn enrich our country.

We can choose to move forward, or we can move backward to the same broken policies that continue to fail our economy and security. I hope that this hearing will help build momentum,

and finally deliver this much overdue bill."

Rep. Linda T. Sanchez (CA-39):

"I applaud the Senate for holding its first hearing on the DREAM Act and looking at this crucial piece of the overall immigration reform puzzle. I would encourage the House Republican leadership to also address this important issue. We can't continue to ignore our broken immigration system. I proudly voted to support this common sense immigration reform in the last Congress. These hard-working students only want to give back to the country they call home. We should allow them the ability to contribute to our economic recovery or defend our nation. We are endangering our economic future by sending intelligent, hard-working young to countries they barely know with the knowledge and skills to economically compete with American businesses."

Rep. Yvette D. Clarke (NY-11):

"I am extremely grateful to the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee, especially Senator Richard Durbin for hosting the first hearing on the DREAM Act. We cannot continue to punish a community of young people that came to this country at no fault of their own. Many communities across this nation have nurtured these young people as their own, investing in their academic and social futures. Therefore, it is time for us to fully integrate the beneficiaries of the DREAM Act to utilize their talents and expertise and enhance this country's state of greatness."

Rep. Dennis Cardoza (CA-18):

"Innocent young people who grew up in this country should be able to serve in our military or earn a college degree without fear of being deported. We need to stop punishing undocumented children and pass the DREAM Act so these young people have a pathway to citizenship."

Rep. Barbara Lee (CA-09):

“Last Congress, it was incredibly disappointing when Senate Republicans did not see it fit to stand up for the more than 800,000 children and young people looking to make better lives for themselves through the passage of the DREAM Act. I am pleased, however, to know that my colleagues in the Senate have decided to take on this pressing issue, once again, by hosting the first ever hearing on the DREAM Act. The DREAM Act is not only morally right and just, but is also in our national interest and reflects the best of our American values. I commend their efforts and will join them by continuing to fight for the rights of these young people.”

Rep. Gwen Moore (WI-04):

“It is a shame that our great country effectively shuts the doors to higher education to children who were born elsewhere and had no say in coming to this country. I thank Senator Durbin for continuing this important fight so that all of our children – no matter where they were born – can achieve their dreams.”

Rep. Al Green (TX-09):

“I support providing a path to citizenship for law-abiding persons who are willing to die in service to our great country; who have lived in, and called this country ‘home,’ since they were children, and for whom we as a nation are willing to allow to make such a supreme sacrifice. I thank Senator Durbin for holding a hearing to make the DREAM Act a reality.”