

**USCMA Resolution on
The DREAM Act
2010 USCMA Annual Meeting
Albuquerque, New Mexico**

"...every man and woman may be regarded as brothers and sisters, children of the same Father"

— Pope Benedict XVI

"The DREAM Act is essential for our country's future."

- Cardinal Roger M. Mahoney, Archbishop of Los Angeles

Resolution: Be it resolved that we, the USCMA, continue to advocate justice for immigrants by calling on our membership to support and campaign for the passage of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act).

The United States Catholic Mission Association continues to promote justice for immigrants by joining with the USCCB and other groups that calls for the passage of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act). The DREAM Act has always had strong bipartisan support, and the U.S. Catholic bishops have been long standing supporters of the legislation.

Efforts have been made to pass the DREAM Act since 2001. The DREAM Act passed the full Senate in May 2006 as part of the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 (CIRA); however, Congress did not pass CIRA. The DREAM Act was then incorporated into the 2007 Kennedy-Kyl comprehensive immigration reform bill (S.1639) and also attached to the FY2008 Department of Defense Authorization Bill (SA.2237); however, it was not passed in either case. The DREAM Act was then introduced as a stand-alone bill in the fall of 2007, but was similarly defeated. On March 26, 2009, Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL) introduced S. 729, the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act of 2009, known as the DREAM Act. Representative Howard Berman (D-CA) has introduced H.R. 1751, the companion bill, in the House of Representatives.

Rationale: "The DREAM Act is not amnesty. Rather, it is the recognition that in our midst are many young people who only know one country: the United States. And they want to contribute to building up our country" (Cardinal Roger Mahoney). If enacted, the DREAM Act would create a pathway through which undocumented immigrant students could obtain conditional permanent residency and, ultimately, American citizenship. Under the legislation, certain students would be eligible for conditional permanent residency if they meet certain criteria, including: entering the United States before age 16; living in the U.S. for at least five continuous years immediately before the bill becomes effective; graduating from high school or gaining admission into an institute of higher education; having "good moral character" and not committed certain crimes; and being younger than 35 when the bill becomes effective. Students must also demonstrate that they have not been under a final order for deportation. After a six year period of conditional permanent residency, these individuals could apply for citizenship if they had continued to demonstrate "good moral character," continued to live in the U.S., and completed at least two years of higher education or served at least two years in the military.

The DREAM Act would make a difference in the lives of undocumented youth who were brought to the United States by their parents and now, because of their lack of legal status, face obstacles to their future. By removing such barriers, the DREAM Act permits immigrant students to pursue a promising future through college education or military service. Those benefitting from the DREAM Act are talented, intelligent and dedicated young people who know only the U.S. as their home.

Suggested Actions:

1. Send your Senators and Representatives a message asking them to support the DREAM Act.
2. Campaign for the passage of DREAM Act by calling on your groups, community members, family and circle of friends. To read more about it, go to www.justiceforimmigrants.org .