

Immigration Policy

AACRAO urges the passage of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act of 2011. Commonly referred to as the DREAM Act, the legislation would provide a path to legal status for young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children by their parents and are pursuing college degrees or serving in the military. It would remove barriers to higher education for students who have grown up in the United States, attended school here, and consider themselves American.

The bill has two major provisions to accomplish this. First, it would repeal Section 505 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 that penalizes states for providing in-state tuition to undocumented students, thus giving back to the states the right to make their own decisions on this matter. Second, it would set up six-year conditional permanent residency status for students who were brought into the country up to the age of 15, have been here at least five years by the bill's enactment date, graduated from a U.S. high school or received a GED test credential, and pass a background check. This status would make them eligible for Federal Work-Study funding and student loans, although not federal financial aid, such as Pell Grants. After six years, DREAM-eligible individuals could qualify for permanent residency by completing at least two years of higher education or two years of military service.

AACRAO firmly believes that this nation is best served – as it has been since its founding – by giving access to higher education to ambitious young men and women who can make a vital contribution to its economic strength and security. Indeed, if the United States is to achieve the goal of returning to world leadership in higher education attainment and to become more competitive in the global economy, it cannot afford to deny their aspirations and prevent them from reaching their potential.