

1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading on the page.
3. Write a one-page reflection in your WN

Congress Considers the DREAM Act

What is the DREAM Act? The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act (the DREAM Act) is a piece of proposed federal legislation in the United States that was first introduced in the United States Senate on August 1, 2001[1] and most recently re-introduced there and the United States House of Representatives on March 26, 2009. This bill would provide certain illegal and deportable alien students who graduate from US high schools, who are of good moral character, arrived in the U.S. illegally as minors, and have been in the country continuously and illegally for at least five years prior to the bill's enactment, the opportunity to earn conditional permanent residency if they complete two years in the military or two years at a four year institution of higher learning. The students would obtain temporary residency for a six year period. Within the six year period, a qualified student must have "acquired a degree from an institution of higher education in the United States or [have] completed at least 2 years, in good standing, in a program for a bachelor's degree or higher degree in the United States," or have "served in the uniformed services for at least 2 years and, if discharged, [have] received an honorable discharge." [2] Military enlistment contracts require an eight year commitment, with active duty commitments typically between four and six years, but as low as two years. [3][4] "Any alien whose permanent resident status is terminated [according to the terms of the Act] shall return to the immigration status the alien had immediately prior to receiving conditional permanent resident status under this Act." [5]

Source: Wikipedia

Details of the DREAM Act

The 111th Congress continued to consider the DREAM Act bill throughout 2010. S.3992, a new version of the DREAM Act, includes numerous changes to address concerns raised about the bill. Among other things, S. 3992:

1. Does not repeal the ban on in-state tuition for illegal immigrants. The DREAM Act does not force states to charge in-state tuition rates for illegal immigrants. The DREAM Act allows illegal immigrants to gain access to Federal Pell Grants and other financial aid.
2. Lowers the age cap for eligibility for the DREAM Act to 29 on the date of enactment. Additionally, in order to be eligible, individuals still must have come to the U.S. as a child (15 or under) and be a long-term resident (at least 5 years). An earlier version of the DREAM Act (S. 1545 in the 108th Congress), authored by Republican Senator Orrin Hatch and cosponsored by Senator John McCain, did not include any age cap. This bill was approved by the Republican-controlled Senate Judiciary Committee on a 16-3 vote.
3. Does not grant legal immigrant status to anyone for at least 2 years. Previous versions of the DREAM Act would have immediately granted legal immigrant status to individuals who met the bill's requirements. Under S. 3992, an individual could obtain "conditional nonimmigrant" status if he proves that he meets the age (currently 29 or under and arrived in the U.S. at 15 or under) and residency requirements (5 years or more) and:
4. Has graduated from an American high school or obtained a GED;
5. Has been a person of "good moral character," as determined by the Department of Homeland Security, from the date the individual initially entered the U.S. (previous versions of the DREAM Act only required an individual to be a person of good moral character from the date of the bill's enactment);

6. Undergoes security and law-enforcement background checks;
7. Undergoes a medical examination; and
8. Registers for the Selective Service.
9. Further limits eligibility for conditional nonimmigrant status by specifically excluding anyone who:
 - Has committed one felony or three misdemeanors;
 - Is likely to become a public charge;
 - Has engaged in voter fraud or unlawful voting;
 - Has committed marriage fraud;
 - Has abused a student visa;
 - Has engaged in persecution; or
 - Poses a public health risk.
10. Gives a conditional non-immigrant the chance to earn legal immigrant status only after 2 years and only if he meets the DREAM Act's college or military service requirements, and other requirements, e.g., pays back taxes and demonstrates the ability to read, write, and speak English and demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of the history, principles, and form of government of the United States.
12. Further limits "chain migration." DREAM Act individuals would have very limited ability to sponsor family members for U.S. citizenship. They could never sponsor extended family members and they could not begin sponsoring parents or siblings for at least 12 years. Parents and siblings who entered the U.S. illegally would have to leave the country for ten years before they could gain legal status and the visa backlog for siblings is decades long.
13. Specifically excludes non-immigrants from the health insurance exchanges created by the Affordable Care Act. Conditional non-immigrants also would be ineligible for Medicaid, Food Stamps and other entitlement programs.
14. Establishes a one-year application deadline. An individual would be required to apply for conditional nonimmigrant status within one year of obtaining a high school degree or GED, being admitted to college, or the bill's date of enactment.
15. Requires anyone applying for the DREAM Act to show that he is likely to qualify in order to receive a stay of deportation while his application is pending. The DREAM Act is not a safe harbor from deportation.
16. Requires the Department of Homeland Security to provide information from an individual's DREAM Act application to any federal, state, tribal, or local law enforcement agency, or intelligence or national security agency in any criminal investigation or prosecution or for homeland security or national security purposes.
17. Places the burden of proof on a DREAM Act applicant. An individual would be required to demonstrate eligibility for the DREAM Act by a preponderance of the evidence.

Additionally, individuals would continue to be excluded if they have received a final order of deportation, have engaged in criminal activity (as defined by the Immigration and Nationality Act), or present a national security or terrorist threat.

Possible WN topics:

What are your thoughts on the DREAM Act? Should it pass? Why? Why not?
Comment on one or more of the conditions of the DREAM Act.