

Immigration Conflict

Should states crack down on unlawful aliens?

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By Kenneth Jost

Pro/Con: Should Congress pass the DREAM Act?



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The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act is rooted in common sense. To begin with, it would benefit a group of unauthorized young people who, in most cases, did not come to this country of their own accord. Rather, they were brought here by their parents. The DREAM Act would also enable its beneficiaries to achieve higher levels of education and obtain better, higher-paying jobs, which would increase their contributions to the U.S. economy and American society. In short, the DREAM Act represents basic fairness and enlightened self-interest.

More than 2 million young people would benefit from the DREAM Act, and their numbers grow by roughly 65,000 per year. They came to the United States before age 18, many as young children. They tend to be culturally American and fluent in English. Their primary ties are to this country, not the countries of their birth. And the majority had no say in the decision to come to this country without authorization — that decision was made by the adult members of their families. Punishing these young people for the actions of their parents



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The appeal of the DREAM Act is obvious. People brought here illegally at a very young age and who have grown up in the United States are the most sympathetic group of illegal immigrants. Much of the public is open to the idea of amnesty for them.

But the actual DREAM Act before Congress is a deeply flawed measure in at least four ways:

- Rather than limiting amnesty to those brought here as infants and toddlers, it applies to illegal immigrants who arrived before their 16th birthday. But if the argument is that their very identity was formed here, age 7 would be a more sensible cutoff. That is recognized as a turning point in a child's psychological development (called the “age of reason” by the Catholic Church, hence the traditional age for First Communion). Such a lower-age cutoff, combined with a requirement of at least 10 years' residence here, would make a hypothetical DREAM Act 2.0 much more defensible.

runs counter to American social values and legal norms. Yet, without the DREAM Act, these young people will be forced to live on the margins of U.S. society or will be deported to countries they may not even know.

Assuming they aren't deported, the young people who would benefit from the DREAM Act face enormous barriers to higher education and professional jobs because of their unauthorized status. They are ineligible for most forms of college financial aid and cannot work legally in this country. The DREAM Act would remove these barriers, which would benefit the U.S. economy.

The College Board estimates that over the course of a working lifetime, a college graduate earns 60 percent more than a high school graduate. This higher income translates into extra tax revenue flowing to federal, state and local governments.

The DREAM Act is in the best interest of the United States both socially and economically. It would resolve the legal status of millions of unauthorized young people in a way that is consistent with core American values. And it would empower these young people to become better-educated, higher-earning workers and taxpayers. Every day that goes by without passage of the DREAM Act is another day of wasted talent and potential.

- All amnesties are vulnerable to fraud, even more than other immigration benefits. About one-fourth of the beneficiaries of the amnesty granted by Congress in 1986 were liars, including one of the leaders of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. But the DREAM Act specifically prohibits the prosecution of anyone who lies on an amnesty application. So you can make any false claim you like about your arrival or schooling in America without fear of punishment. A DREAM Act 2.0 would make clear that any lies, no matter how trivial, will result in arrest and imprisonment.
- All amnesties send a signal to prospective illegal immigrants that, if you get in and keep your head down, you might benefit from the next amnesty. But the bill contains no enforcement provisions to limit the need for another DREAM Act a decade from now. That's why a serious proposal would include measures such as electronic verification of the legal status of all new hires, plus explicit authorization for state and local enforcement of immigration law.
- Finally, all amnesties reward illegal immigrants — in this case including the adults who brought their children here illegally. A credible DREAM Act 2.0 would bar the adult relatives of the beneficiaries from ever receiving any immigration status or even a right to visit the United States. If those who came as children are not responsible, then those who are responsible must pay the price for their lawbreaking.

Duncan Stumps For Dream Act Joey Palacios - Texas Public Radio News



The Secretary of the Department of Education says he supports the DREAM Act.

March 12, 2012 · Education Secretary Arne Duncan believes that the United States Congress should pass the DREAM Act (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act) which would allow undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children, completed high school, and spent either two years in the military or college to become U.S. citizens.

At a White House summit here in San Antonio, Duncan received thunderous applause as he announced his support.

“We have to pass the DREAM act. They’ve gone to school, they’ve gotten great grades, they’ve been community leaders, they’ve participated on sports teams, they’ve been in student government, and they’ve done service learning projects in the community. For us to slam shut the door of opportunity once they graduate from high school makes no sense whatsoever,” Duncan says.

Duncan says that the United States cannot leave the talent those individuals possess at the sidelines.

“These young people are either going to be on the margins of society or they’re going to be the future innovators, entrepreneurs, and job creators that our country desperately needs,” he adds.

Duncan adds the he is deeply disappointed that Congress did not pass the DREAM Act and vows that he and President Obama will keep fighting to make it law.

“It’s unconscionable that these young people who are role-models and exemplary citizens don’t have a chance to pursue their dreams going forward.”

April 27, 2012

Five Moral Arguments Against the DREAM Act By Ira Mehlman

It’s back. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) is once again pushing the DREAM Act amnesty. Before a packed room (mostly of illegal aliens), the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing earlier this week stacked with witnesses who favor granting amnesty to millions of illegal aliens.

Leaving aside all of the deceitful provisions that have been built into the bill that makes it a much broader amnesty than proponents let on, it is important to address the fundamental premise that passing the bill is a moral imperative because the people who would benefit are blameless for being here illegally.

The DREAM Act fulfills the parents' principle reason for breaking the law in the first place. Ask the typical illegal alien why he or she came to United States illegally, and invariably the answer is, "I wanted to do better for my family." This is a perfectly rational and understandable response, but not a justification for violating the law. In essence, what the DREAM Act does is provide the parents precisely what they sought when they brought their kids illegally to the United States: a green card and all of the benefits that America has to offer. Even if the bill were to include a provision that DREAM Act beneficiaries could never sponsor the parents who brought them to the country illegally, it would still fulfill the parents' primary objective for bringing them here.

The DREAM Act would touch-off an even greater wave of illegal immigration. Because the DREAM Act is being marketed as a moral imperative – as opposed to a more general amnesty, which is sold as bowing to reality – it comes with an absolute assurance that it will be repeated. If we have a moral imperative to provide amnesty to the current population of people who were brought here as kids, won't we have the same moral imperative for the next generation of people who arrive under similar circumstances? The unmistakable message to people all around the world is: Get over here and bring your kids. America will feel morally obligated to give them green cards too.

The DREAM Act absolves illegal aliens of their fundamental responsibilities as parents. There is a fundamental principle that parents are responsible for the consequences that their actions and choices have on their kids. Unfortunately, children inevitably pay a price when parents make bad decisions or break laws. The DREAM Act carves out a single exception to this universal tenet of the social contract. The message it sends is that if you violate U.S. immigration law, American society is responsible for fixing the mess you created for your kids.

The absence of a reward or benefit is not the same as a punishment. DREAM Act proponents repeatedly argue that by not granting legal status to targeted beneficiaries we are, essentially, punishing children for the sins of their parents. This is an absolutely specious claim. By no stretch of the imagination are the children of illegal aliens being punished. Not rewarding them with legal residence and expensive college tuition subsidies is simply withholding benefits to which they never had any entitlement in the first place.

Adults have the obligation to do the right thing, even if their parents have done the wrong thing. Society glorifies people who do what is right, especially when doing what is right comes at some significant cost. Yes, many would-be DREAM Act beneficiaries have been dealt a bad hand (by their parents). As difficult (even unfair) as it may be, upon reaching adulthood they have the responsibility to obey the law. When, for example, Jose Antonio Vargas proclaims on the pages of The New York Times Magazine, that he knowingly engaged in illegal activities in order to remain and work in the United States illegally, he became culpable in his own right. While he, and others like him, may be more sympathetic than the people who committed the predicate offense, their situation does not excuse their own illegal acts.

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