

REP. DAVIS STATEMENT ON SUPPORT OF THE DREAM ACT

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Why I support the DREAM Act. by Congressman Danny K. Davis

The 7th Congressional District is home to many different ethnic and immigrant communities. These communities represent the diversity that America offers and its richness of opportunities to pursue the American dream. I have long been an advocate for comprehensive immigration reform and this bill, while targeted, provides a key path to citizenship for those students who grew up in the United States and mostly know no other home.

The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act, or DREAM Act, is a bipartisan and targeted legislative proposal that would provide conditional nonimmigrant status for five years to individuals who: (1) came to the United States before turning 16 years old; (2) have lived continuously in the United States for at least five years prior to the date of enactment; (3) were under the age of 30 on the date of enactment; (4) demonstrate good moral character; (5) are not inadmissible or deportable under a number of key grounds; and (6) have graduated from high school, have obtained a GED certificate, or have been admitted to an institution of higher education in the United States.

Before these individuals could apply for a five-year extension to their conditional nonimmigrant status, they would have to meet additional requirements – in particular, completion of at least two years of either college or military service. After ten years, these individuals would be eligible to apply for permanent resident status if they have; (1) paid taxes (2) demonstrated the ability to read, write and speak English; (3) maintained good moral character throughout the 10 years (4) lived continuously in the United States throughout the 10 years; and (5) has successfully completed security and law-enforcement background checks.

While many opponents of this bill argue it increases or encourages illegal immigration or amnesty; this can be nothing further from the truth. The Dream Act further limits eligibility for conditional status by specifically excluding anyone who: (1) has committed one felony or three misdemeanors (2) has engaged in voter fraud or unlawful voting; (3) is likely to become a public charge; (4) has committed marriage fraud; (5) has abused a student visa; (6) has engaged in persecution; or (6) poses a public health risk.

Giving these young people the opportunity to be legal citizens will provide a way for them to become productive tax payers which will help build a better America. I am proud to support the Dream Act and I look forward to its passage.