

Washington, D.C. - Rep. David Price (D-NC) released the following statement today after House passage of the bipartisan DREAM Act (H.R. 5281), which would allow a limited number of undocumented young people who were brought to the United States as minors a chance to apply for legal residency. The legislation would give these young people a chance to contribute to the well-being of all Americans by serving in the Armed Services and/or pursuing higher education.

"The DREAM Act is a carefully targeted bill that creates a pathway to citizenship for hardworking young people who were brought to this country as children. It requires that they be of good moral character and demonstrate their commitment to their own future and that of their community by seeking higher education or volunteering for military service. In short, it provides deserving young people a shot at the American dream, which is the right thing to do.

"The DREAM Act also serves an important homeland security goal. Our immigration enforcement dollars should be—and increasing have been during my tenure as Chairman of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee—targeted at removing criminal aliens. It makes little sense to expend resources and manpower to deport young people who have made this country their own and who want to serve in the military or attain higher education. By granting these young people legal status, The DREAM Act will allow us to continue focusing our enforcement efforts on the most serious offenders in our communities."

Summary of H.R. 5281 – DREAM Act

Under the bill, a DREAM Act applicant who meets the bill's requirements becomes a "conditional nonimmigrant." The DREAM Act would allow an individual to obtain this conditional status only if he or she meets all of the following requirements:

- 1) was brought to the United States as a child (15 years old or younger);

- 2) is currently 29 years old or younger

- 3) has lived in the U.S. for 5 years or more before the date of enactment;

- 4) has graduated from an American high school, has obtained a GED, or is admitted to an institution of higher education;

- 5) has been a person of "good moral character," as defined by our immigration laws, from the date the individual initially entered the United States;

- 6) submits biometric and biographic information and completes security and law-enforcement background checks;

- 7) undergoes a medical examination;

- 8) registers for the Selective Service; and

- 9) pays a significant surcharge in connection with the initial application.

The DREAM Act further limits eligibility for conditional status by specifically excluding anyone who has committed a felony or three misdemeanors, engaged in voter fraud, committed marriage fraud or abused a student visa.

Under the bill, a successful Dream Act applicant receives conditional status for an initial period of 5 years. After those 5 years, the individual applies for an extension of their conditional status for a second period of 5 years, provided they meet all of the following requirements:

1. has demonstrated good moral character during the 5-year period they have had conditional status;

2. has lived continuously in the United States during the 5 years; and

3. has either:

A. earned a degree from an institution of higher education;

B. completed at least two years of post-secondary education in good standing towards a bachelor's degree; or

C. served in the U.S. Armed Forces for at least two years and, if discharged, has received an honorable discharge.

After 10 years in conditional status, the Dream Act then gives this limited group of young, highly-motivated individuals the chance to earn lawful permanent resident status, but only if the applicant meets all of the following additional standards:

1. has paid taxes;

2. has demonstrated 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;

3. has maintained good moral character throughout the 10 years;

4. has lived continuously in the United States throughout the 10 years; and

5. has once more submitted biometric and biographic information and completed security and law-enforcement background checks.

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