



NHCLC Statement of Support of the DREAM Act

Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and Border Security

June 28th, 2011

The National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, also known as the Hispanic Evangelical Association with 34,218 member churches and representing approximately 18 million Hispanic evangelical Christians supports the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, the DREAM Act. We urge Congress to pass this bill as expeditiously as possible.

Every single year, as approximately 3 million young people receive their diplomas and subsequently cast their caps into the air as they enter into the phase of their lives full of promise and hope; over 60,000 stand with disappointment and despair. Every single year approximately 65,000 young people educated in America, and raised in our great nation stand hostage to an injustice that counters the very ethos of our blessed narrative.

These children who arrived in our nation not by personal choice but via the conduit of decisions made by their corresponding parents suffer the consequences and consequently pay the price for the sins committed by others. Christ himself admonished us to permit the little ones, the children, to come to him for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them. Without a doubt, Christ stood committed to the care and protection of the most vulnerable, especially children. To continue to punish these children is nothing less than anti-Christian, anti-American and morally reprehensible. Every single time these children suffer rejection from colleges and universities, service and work opportunities due to the lack of legal status, we collectively discard the potential of tens of thousands of lives.

Correspondingly, the question arises, where will these young people turn to when all productive doors for education, service and employment continue to exclude them? The only victors in the current reality are those in our cities committed to promulgating a culture of violence, crime and nefarious activities. As a nation, as people of good will, we can and must do better.

As a result, the Dream Act offers a legislative solution to both a legal and moral problem. The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act facilitates a platform for tens of thousands of young people to integrate fully in the collective American experience via the doors of academics, military service and self-reliance. This piece of legislation is not only practical but also compatible with our highest values of work, family, personal responsibility and service.

In essence the Dream Act assures that the financial investment made by American taxpayers in our educational system does not evaporate in the climate of political expediency. Millions spent on educating these children in our public schools must not go to waste. We owe it these children, our fellow taxpayers, our communities and our future. For that matter, we urge Congress to repudiate all vestiges of apathy and political posturing and rise up for a cause that is both right and just.

For at the end of the day this issue is after all about dreams. Not just the dream of innocent children but the American dream. How we treat the innocent, the children and the least amongst us speaks to the moral fiber of our nation. Let us save these dreams by passing the Dream Act. In doing so, we protect our values, our families, our communities and as a result we salvage the American Dream.

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez

President, NHCLC

Hispanic Evangelical Association