

## DREAM Act and General Immigration Education Materials



## Background on the DREAM Act

Each year, approximately 65,000 high school graduates are prevented from attending college or working legally due to their undocumented immigration status. Our immigration law currently has no mechanism to consider their special circumstances, and even if they leave the U.S. in an effort to enter legally, they are barred from re-entry for up to 10 years since they have been here in an undocumented status. The DREAM Act would correct this inequity by allowing upstanding high school graduates who were brought to the United States as children years ago to obtain a temporary visa so they could attend school, travel, and work legally. After 10 years, they could apply for a green card (lawful permanent residency), and eventually apply for citizenship. To qualify for the temporary visa, students would have to prove they are under 30 years old; were brought to the United States before they were 16; have been here for at least five years; have graduated from High School; and have a criminal-free record and good moral conduct. Then, they would have to complete two years of college, trade school, or military service to then adjust their status to lawful permanent residency and pursue a pathway to citizenship.

- Across ideological and partisan lines, we can agree that punishing children for their parents' actions violates our most deeply held moral values. The DREAM Act has received significant bipartisan support in the past, and today we're calling on both Democrats and Republicans to step up and give these young people the opportunity to pursue the American dream.
- We ought to give talented, upstanding, hardworking youth the opportunity to serve their country in the military or contribute to their country through higher education. It's not right to deport children who haven't done anything wrong to a country they've never known.
- The status quo is not tenable... our nation is losing precious talent every year, as young people face insurmountable barriers to education and employment.

### Myths

- The DREAM Act would not force states to provide in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants.
- The DREAM Act is not 'amnesty', since these children did not choose to come here illegally. It merely allows them to correct their status with a law that they had no say in breaking.
- The DREAM Act does not facilitate 'chain migration'. Students who qualify would have to wait a minimum of 13 years before even applying for their parents to join them in the United States. Even then, parents would have to wait 4-7 years, plus a 10-year bar for illegal presence.
- The DREAM Act would not jeopardize more comprehensive immigration reform.

More information at <http://1.usa.gov/iPUARJ>



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## MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT IMMIGRATION IN THE U.S.A

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### ***Myth # 1: Immigrants Come Here to Take Jobs Away From Americans***

Immigrants work in niche occupations; including many areas U.S. workers don't choose to work in. A recent study showed NO correlation between high unemployment in areas with many immigrants. Most undocumented immigrants are here to escape poverty, oppression, domestic violence and other unlivable circumstances. Many refugees are actually undocumented immigrants because the laws for who "counts" as a legal refugee are extremely restricted.

### ***Myth # 2 Immigrants Increase Crime***

New immigrants are *less* likely to commit crimes than native-born Americans. While immigration has increased since 1994, including doubling undocumented populations, violent crime rates fell by 34.2%.

### ***Myth # 3 Immigrants Don't Pay Taxes***

All immigrants pay taxes (income, property, sales, etc.). Immigrants pay \$90-\$140 *billion* a year in federal, state, and local income taxes. Undocumented immigrants also pay income taxes, evidenced by the Social Security Administration's "suspense file" (taxes that cannot be matched to workers' names and social security numbers). In 2002, this suspense file grew by \$56 billion in reported earnings, with \$7 billion in Social Security taxes and \$1.5 billion in Medicare taxes largely paid by immigrants who will *never* enjoy these programs. Immigrants contribute \$611 billion to our Social Security system; **a moratorium on legal immigration would raise the deficit 31% over 50 yrs.**

### ***Myth # 4 Immigrants Don't Contribute Economically to Society***

The immigrant community is not a drain on the U.S. economy but, in fact, is a net benefit. Research reported by the CATO Institute and the President's Council of Economic Advisors reveals that the average immigrant pays a net \$80,000 more in taxes than they collect in government services. For immigrants with college degrees the net fiscal return is \$198,000. Furthermore, The American Farm Bureau asserts that without guest workers the U.S. economy would lose as much as \$9 billion a year in agricultural production and 20 percent of current production would go overseas. Immigrants have a high rate of entrepreneurship, opening businesses and creating jobs.

### ***Myth # 5 Immigrants Don't Want to Learn English***

Immigrants learn English today at the same rate as Italian, German, and E. Europeans who emigrated in the 19<sup>th</sup> & early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are not enough English classes to accommodate all the immigrants who want to learn.

### ***Myth # 6 Immigrants Have a Way to Immigrate Legally; They Just Need to Wait Their Turn***

There are no legal possibilities for many immigrants. Visa caps, complex laws including 1996 changes in the law means if an immigrant leaves and tries to apply to re-enter, they could be separated from their family for 10 years or more. There are virtually no permanent employment visas for unskilled immigrants; the wait is 8 years and no employer will hold a job open that long. **Immigrants can't wait in line, because there is no line.**



## **Background on administrative relief**

Under current law, President Obama and Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano possess a variety of tools which they can use to not only stop the detention and deportation of DREAMers, but to provide them a pathway to legal status. The president has the discretion, granted him by Congress, to provide deferred action, deferred enforced departure, parole in place, temporary protected status, etc. to individuals or groups who are not security threats to the United States.

More information on this authority and resources asking for President Obama to use this authority can be found at: <http://bit.ly/kIU2Oh> and <http://bit.ly/n9YaWo>

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## Be Not Afraid – Resources for Congregations and Immigrant Families (English and Spanish)

### Be Equipped –

Be Equipped is one of four modules in LIRS's Be Not Afraid project (<http://bit.ly/p9UHso>). The project is a set of tools designed to assist congregations serving immigrants as they seek to reduce fear and create welcoming communities through education and advocacy. The tools in the Be Equipped module help congregations foster discussion of immigration issues and faithful responses.

LIRS would love to hear how you have used the Be Not Afraid materials in your community. Please contact us at [benotafraid@lirs.org](mailto:benotafraid@lirs.org) to share your stories or request further information about the project.

Download Be Equipped resources (all resources are PDFs unless otherwise noted):

- Mythbuster (<http://bit.ly/mWyDni>) debunks common misunderstandings
- Three-Sunday Series (<http://bit.ly/r98r27>) worship planning tips, children's sermons, bulletin inserts, three-part Bible study
- Bible Study Only (<http://bit.ly/pJuaig>)
- Cultural Competency Tips (<http://bit.ly/pk4Ydf>)

### Estén Equipados

Estén Equipados es uno de cuatro módulos del proyecto No Temas (<http://bit.ly/oa4Xwk>) de LIRS. El proyecto es un conjunto de herramientas diseñadas para ayudar a las congregaciones que atienden a inmigrantes en un momento en que intentan, mediante la educación y la propugnación, reducir el temor y crear comunidades que los acojan. Las herramientas del módulo Estén Equipados ayudan a las congregaciones a fomentar las conversaciones sobre problemas y temas de inmigración y respuestas dignas de fe.

En Servicios Luteranos de Inmigración y para Refugiados (Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service; LIRS) nos encantaría saber cómo ha usado los materiales de No Temas en su comunidad. Por favor comuníquese con nosotros a [benotafraid@lirs.org](mailto:benotafraid@lirs.org) para obtener más información.

Descargue los recursos de Estén Informados (todos los recursos están en formato PDF, a menos que se indique lo contrario):

- Destruye-Mitos (<http://bit.ly/mQQH12>) desacredita malos entendidos comunes
- Serie de Tres Domingos (<http://bit.ly/mUZM03>) consejos para planear la adoración, sermones infantiles, suplementos de boletines, estudio de la Biblia en tres partes)
- Estudio de la Biblia en Línea Únicamente (<http://bit.ly/obx5bD>)
- Consejos sobre Habilidades Interculturales (<http://bit.ly/oxBZVu>)