

Pass the Dream Act now

Fixing our immigration system will take time. A path to citizenship for the Dreamers is a good way to begin.

From the Editors in the [December 6, 2017](#) issue



Student Jannett Esparza at the opening of the Titan Dreamers Resource Center at California State University, Fullerton. [Some rights reserved](#) by [CSUF Photos](#).

On November 9, nearly 1,000 high school and college students descended on Washington, D.C., to demand that Congress act this year to protect the 800,000 young immigrants who have been shielded from deportation by an Obama-era executive order referred to as DACA. The DACA order gave these “Dreamers”—people who were brought to this country as children—the legal status to pursue an education and a career.

When President Trump announced that he was canceling DACA, effective in 2018, he promised that there would be a legislative fix for the Dreamers. These immigrants have used Obama’s 2012 order to move forward with their lives and become students, employees, business owners, and parents (of children who are U.S.

citizens). They and their families, their employers, and their teachers await that legislative solution. But time is running out.

There's already a bipartisan consensus that the Dreamers should have legal status. Polls show that a majority in both political parties think the Dreamers should be allowed to stay in the country. Yet, as has happened repeatedly since the DREAM Act was first proposed 16 years ago, Dreamers may end up as pawns in a political game. Legislation to resolve their status may not even come to a vote.

Some members of Congress are stalling, calling the end-of-year deadline "artificial." Others say they will support a new version of the DREAM Act only if it includes more funding for border security measures—a political compromise that has failed Dreamers many times in the past. Trump wants any deal on the Dreamers to include funding for a border wall.

A relatively simple legislative fix is already in Congress. The DREAM Act of 2017, cosponsored by Dick Durbin (D., Ill.) and Lindsey Graham (R., S.C.), sits in the Senate Judiciary Committee. It is a "clean" bill—meaning no other provisions are attached to it. A similar bill cosponsored by Representatives Lucille Roybal-Allard (D., Calif.) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R., Fla.) is in committee in the House. The sponsors and supporters cross geographic and political lines, signaling the importance of this legislation in every part of the country. These bills would make the provisions of DACA permanent, provide a path to citizenship for these young people, and end the uncertainty under which DACA recipients live.

The DREAM Act does not attempt to solve the larger problems of U.S. immigration. The fate of 11 million undocumented immigrants—including Dreamers' parents and grandparents—will still be uncertain. Passing the DREAM Act is simply the right and fair thing to do for people who are already contributing to the only homeland they have ever known.

A version of this article appears in the December 6 print edition under the title "Deadline for Dreamers."