

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD OF  
*The National Association of Independent Colleges and  
Universities (NAICU)*

BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES  
AND BORDER SECURITY  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
UNITED STATES SENATE

AT A HEARING ENTITLED  
“S. 952, DEVELOPMENT, RELIEF, AND EDUCATION  
FOR ALIEN MINORS (DREAM) ACT OF 2011”

PRESENTED  
JUNE 28, 2011

Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Cornyn, and members of the Subcommittee; thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement of support for the DREAM Act of 2011, and for Chairman Durbin and the committee’s efforts to enact this important bill.

The National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU) serves as the unified national voice of independent higher education. Since 1976, NAICU has represented private colleges and universities on policy issues with the federal government. With more than 1,000 members nationwide, NAICU reflects the diversity of private, nonprofit higher education in the U.S. Members include traditional liberal arts colleges, major research universities, church- and faith-related institutions, historically black colleges and universities, women’s colleges, performing and visual arts institutions, two-year colleges, and schools of law, medicine, engineering, business and other professions.

NAICU has long-supported the DREAM Act. The DREAM Act is also widely supported throughout the higher education community. It would affect students who came to the United States as illegal immigrants before they were 16 and who have been in the country for at least five years. The bill would grant temporary residency, during which time, these individuals would have the chance to earn permanent residency if they complete at least two years of college or serve at least two years in the armed forces with an honorable discharge.

Many of our member colleges and universities enroll DREAM Act-eligible students. These students deserve a chance to become successful U.S. citizens. They have worked hard pursuing their education. Our country has invested in them throughout their early education and in spite of formidable challenges, many are pursuing a college education. Our nation would benefit by allowing these young adults to become tax-paying contributors to the U.S. economy.

The continuing detainment and deportation of DREAM Act students is not only a waste of scarce federal resources, it is morally indefensible for us to punish these young people who were brought to the United States as infants or young children by their undocumented parents. Until the DREAM Act is able to be considered by Congress, these individuals should be able to continue to pursue their education or military service without the risk of being sent back to a country most of them have no familiarity with. Many of our member institutions with DREAM-eligible students are writing to President Obama requesting that he issue an Executive Order that would defer the deportation of these students until the DREAM Act is enacted.

The DREAM Act of 2011 includes important abuse-prevention measures. Participants would not be eligible for federal grant aid, including Pell grants, so enacting this bill would not add costs to the Pell program. Violation of this would result in tough criminal penalties for fraud. In addition, eligible students must submit to rigorous testing, background checks and medical exams.

In conclusion, failure to enact the dream act will result in the deportation of students who have little or no connection with the country they were born in, and want to be contributing members of the U.S. economy. Our country is at a massive economic loss when we prevent these college educated young adults from legally entering the U.S. workforce. On behalf of the NAICU member colleges and universities, we thank you for your dedication to the DREAM Act and urge its prompt consideration.