

What is the Dream Act?

The Dream Act. As a result of the efforts of various organizations across the country that began pressing Congress to introduce federal legislation that would provide a path for undocumented students to obtain legal resident status, the Development, Relief, and Education of Alien Minors (DREAM) Act was introduced in 2001. The bill would benefit undocumented students who meet the following requirements:

- Entry into the United States before age 16.
- Continuous presence in the United States for 5 years prior to the bill's enactment.
- Receipt of a high school diploma or its equivalent (i.e., a GED).
- Demonstration of good moral character.

If passed, the DREAM Act would enable undocumented high school graduates to apply for conditional status, which would authorize them for up to 6 years of legal residence. During the 6-year period the student would be required to attend college and graduate, or serve in the U.S. military for at least 2 years. Students that meet these requirements would be granted permanent residency at the end of the 6-year period (Yates, 2004). Despite a decade of efforts by immigration advocates, as of 2011, the DREAM Act has not been passed into law and thus undocumented students remain in limbo.



Reference List

Peréz, W. (2012). *Americans by heart*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Yates, L. S. (2004). *Plyer v. Doe* and the rights of undocumented immigrants to higher education: Should undocumented students be eligible to in-state college tuition rates? *Washington University Law Quarterly*, 82, 585-609.

