

## **The Dream Act**

The bipartisan Dream Act would allow a select group of immigrant students who grew up in the United States to contribute more fully to the country they love. These young people, known as Dreamers, have lived in America since they were children and built their lives here. They grew up pledging allegiance to the American flag and singing the Star Spangled Banner. They are American in every way except for their immigration status. Under current law they live in fear of deportation and cannot fully realize their potential or utilize their talents in service to the communities, cities, and nation they call home.

The Dream Act would allow these young people to earn lawful permanent residence and eventually American citizenship if they:

- Are longtime residents who came to the U.S. as children;
- Graduate from high school or obtain a GED;
- Pursue higher education, work lawfully for at least 3 years, or serve in the military;
- Pass security and law enforcement background checks and pay a reasonable application fee;
- Demonstrate proficiency in the English language and a knowledge of United States history; and
- Have not committed a felony or other serious crimes and do not pose a threat to our country.

We have already invested in these young people by educating them in our schools and they are now a vital part of our workforce, contributing to our economic growth and our society as teachers, engineers, nurses, and small business owners. Unfortunately, even though many would like to serve, almost all are restricted from earning the designation of United States Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine. It's past time we remedy that unnecessary prohibition. It makes no sense to squander these young people's talents – and penalize our own nation – by deporting them to countries they barely remember.

We can allow a generation of young immigrants with great potential and ambition to contribute more fully to our society, economy, and national security, or we can lose their talents to foreign competitors. The Dream Act would offer a path to earned citizenship and a brighter future for these young people and our nation.