



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES



June 28, 2011

The Honorable Richard Durbin, Chairman
The Honorable John Cornyn, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and Border Security
United States Senate
224 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Durbin and Cornyn:

On behalf of the presidents and trustees of the nation's 1,167 community colleges, we write in support of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, S. 952. Thank you for holding a hearing on this crucial legislation.

Increased access to higher education is a top priority for community colleges and our students. As open-access institutions, community colleges serve as the only feasible gateway to higher education for millions of Americans each year. Nearly half of our students are the first in their families to attend college, and community colleges are the most culturally diverse sector of higher education. Our members continually seek to increase access to higher education, which is now necessary to living the "American Dream" and preparing a workforce that can compete in the 21st century global economy.

The DREAM Act would provide a path to legal status for thousands of undocumented students that were brought to this country as children, worked their way through high school, and now face an uncertain future. It would also return responsibility to the states to decide on their own tuition policies for undocumented students. As higher education institutions strive to produce significantly greater numbers of Americans with college credentials, the DREAM Act would help and encourage the approximately 65,000 undocumented students that graduate from our high schools or obtain a GED each year (as well as thousands of others who have already done so) to continue their educations and make even greater socioeconomic contributions to society.

The past, present and future community college students who would benefit from the DREAM Act cannot wait any longer to begin the next chapter in their lives. We hope this hearing is just the first step in expedient passage of the DREAM Act. It is in our collective self-interest that all students have the same opportunity to achieve their dreams of higher education.

Sincerely,

Walter G. Bumphus
AACC President and CEO

J. Noah Brown
ACCT President and CEO