



*The National Voice of the Hispanic Legal Community.*

December 17, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

**Re: October 24, 2007 Statement of Administration Policy on S.2205 – The  
DREAM Act**

Dear President Bush:

As you have previously recognized, there are many “young people who were brought illegally as children and have come to know the United States as home.” Many of these hardworking and talented children are foreclosed from opportunities to continue to meaningfully contribute to American society as they become young adults because of their unlawful immigration status. The “Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors” (DREAM) Act proposes a solution for these individuals that benefits both them as well as the American people. Thus, on behalf of the Hispanic National Bar Association representing over 38,000 U.S. Latino attorneys, judges, law professors, law students, and legal professionals across the United States, we write to urge you to reconsider opposing the Act as described in your Statement of Administration Policy on S. 2205 (“Statement”) and invite you to engage in a dialogue with us regarding the importance and value of such legislation. We respectfully request the opportunity to meet with you discuss the DREAM Act and immigration generally and will be calling your White House Counsel’s office to schedule a meeting.

In particular, we wanted to address and allay some of the concerns expressed in the Statement. First, the Statement suggests that the DREAM Act would provide an incentive for future undocumented immigration. As drafted, no future immigrants would qualify for DREAM Act relief, however, nor would those who have come to the United States within the last five years. Thus, the Act will not reward those who violate immigration laws anew.

Second, the Statement states that the DREAM Act would provide “a special path to citizenship that is unavailable to other prospective immigrants.” Again, the Act would benefit only those brought here years ago as children without their consent, and not “prospective” immigrants. Most of these youngsters were brought to the U.S. while very young and have lived here the majority of their lives. The U.S. is the only home they know, they are fluent in English and have little or no ties to their country of birth.

Third, that individuals under 30 who have grown up here since they were children would be able to benefit from the DREAM Act if they have already completed college would also be beneficial to our country. These children include valedictorians, honor students, class presidents, star athletes, aspiring teachers, doctors, scientists, poets, and US soldiers.

Fourth, the Statement mistakenly suggests that family members would be able to instantly come to the United States. Current immigration laws preclude the quick entry of eligible family members. While foreign spouses of DREAM Act beneficiaries might be eligible to attain lawful immigration status, under the current immigration laws, they would need to wait years, in many cases more than 10 years, before they would be eligible to immigrate any other family member.

Fifth, the DREAM Act does not provide for any special welfare benefits. DREAM Act beneficiaries would be eligible to the same benefits as other lawful residents, but only after 5 year bar on federal means-tested benefits. More importantly, given their college education or military training, it is unlikely that many DREAM Act beneficiaries would *require* government benefits. To the contrary, these individuals would contribute their considerable talents and service to our Nation and their tax dollars to the federal coffers.

Sixth, the DREAM Act does not contain “loopholes that would authorize permanent status for certain aliens convicted of multiple misdemeanors and even felonies.” This is because beneficiaries under the DREAM Act would be subject to the same highly restrictive standards of inadmissibility and removability for criminal convictions that apply to every other individual seeking lawful immigration status.

Seventh, rather than leading to “large-scale document fraud,” creating a lawful path to citizenship would serve to reduce fraud. Moreover, the requirements for demonstrating compliance with the DREAM Act would be rigorous and would make fraudulent claims extremely difficult. For example, beneficiaries would have to produce school records documenting their longtime childhood residence here; such school records are difficult to forge and easy to verify. In addition, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service already subjects all immigrant applicants to stringent documentary and certification requirements, and would do the same before granting DREAM Act relief.

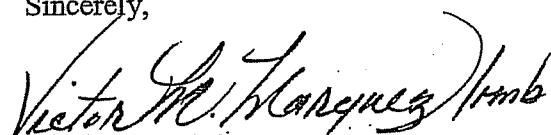
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No one should deprive these bright and motivated young people, who do not have lawful status through no fault of their own, the opportunity to pursue the American dream. Indeed, the Supreme Court observed in *Plyer* that denying the youngsters in question a proper education would likely contribute to "the creation and perpetuation of a subclass of illiterates within our boundaries, surely adding to the problems and costs of unemployment, welfare, and crime." Thus, we urge you to reconsider your opposition to the DREAM Act and will be calling you shortly with the hope that we can discuss further.

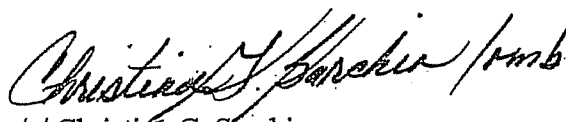
Sincerely,



/s/ Victor M. Marquez

President

The Hispanic National Bar Association



/s/ Christina G. Sarchio

Vice-President, External Affairs

The Hispanic National Bar

Association