



SPECIAL EDITION ENOTICIAS: HNBA AND DREAMERS ATTEND FIRST EVER U.S. SENATE HEARING ON DREAM

HNBA sends a sincere thank you to the over 1,000 individuals who signed the HNBA DREAM petition presented to the U.S. Senate at the first-ever hearing on DREAM. To [add your voice to the petition](#) that is part of our ongoing DREAM Campaign, or for instructions on how to [reach out to your Member of Congress](#) and advocate for DREAM, and to help others do so as well, click [here](#).



Washington, D.C. - On June 28th, Assistant Senate Majority Leader U.S. **Senator Dick Durbin** (D-IL) chaired the first-ever **U.S. Senate Hearing on the DREAM Act** before the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and Border Security. The HNBA submitted [written testimony](#) outlining the legal, economic, and national security arguments that demonstrate the case for DREAM, along with a petition signed by over 1,000 HNBA members and supporters in favor of passage. Representing the HNBA at the hearing were Claudine Martinez, HNBA National Vice President for External Affairs; Zuraya Tapia, HNBA Executive Director; and Lizett Rodriguez, 2011 Summer intern. This was also the first time the HNBA provided live-tweet coverage to its members and followers by reporting on the hearing via its [Twitter page](#). Senator Durbin began the hearing by highlighting exceptional undocumented students that were in the

audience, and explained how the DREAM Act would allow this talented youth full participation in American society. Over 400 DREAMers from across the country attended the hearing and events surrounding the hearing. Many of these students were recognized individually and had their stories told by various witnesses at the hearing. To read the HNBA's testimony and to learn more about the HNBA's national campaign for passage of the DREAM Act, click [here](#).



Hearing Room in Hart Senate Office Building, filled with students, activists, and media.

Over the past year, the HNBA has led an active and effective action campaign in support of passage of the DREAM Act. In September 2010, U.S. Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) re-introduced the DREAM Act. Under the leadership of Claudine Martinez, HNBA National Vice President of External Affairs, and Diana Sen, HNBA President, the HNBA launched its first-ever interactive advocacy campaign in September 2010 in support of DREAM, and mobilized members to directly contact their respective legislators. In Fall of 2010, President Diana Sen issued a [letter](#) calling for a cloture vote on DREAM, and an [op-ed](#) piece. The remarkable response from members over a matter of days proved that our membership stands ready to support important HNBA advocacy work at a moment's notice, when provided the necessary tools to rapidly respond.

On May 11th of this year Senator Durbin [re-introduced the DREAM Act](#) in the Senate (S.952), with Representative Howard Berman (D-CA) re-introducing it in the House ([H.R.1842](#)), and called for a hearing to follow. In the ten years that DREAM legislation has been pending in Congress, this marked the first time that the U.S. Senate held a hearing on this issue. In speaking with Committee Staff, they called the HNBA testimony the most comprehensive testimony received. Witnesses included The Honorable Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Homeland Security; The Honorable Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education, U.S. Department of Education; Dr. Clifford Stanley, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, U.S. Department of Defense; Lieutenant Colonel Margaret Stock, U.S. Army Reserves Retired, Anchorage, AK; Ola Kaso, Warren, MI; and Steven A. Camarota, Director of Research, Center for Immigration Studies, Washington, DC.

Senator Durbin began the hearing by highlighting exceptional undocumented students that were in the audience, and explained how the DREAM Act would allow this talented youth full participation in American society. He noted that these young people were brought to the U.S. as children before they had any willful decision-making ability.



First panel testifying at the hearing

During her testimony, Secretary Napolitano addressed the concern of security by explaining DREAM, **"It's important to the nation as a whole and it's important to the mission of Homeland Security."** The Secretary's testimony came just after new guidelines in prosecutorial discretion were issued through [a memorandum](#) by Assistant

Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), John Morton. These new guidelines allow DHS to take DREAM eligibility into consideration in enforcement actions. **On the effect of passing DREAM on national security, Secretary Napolitano noted, "Our priorities are strengthened by DREAM, allowing us to focus on real security threats."** Secretary Duncan similarly noted the benefits of the DREAM Act expressing that it is a return on investment for the U.S., not an expense. Secretary Duncan, urged that Congress utilize these talented DREAMers and allow them to pursue their full potential, stating **"we can only educate ourselves to a better economy."**

"The DREAM Act is a necessary step that would provide American students the opportunity to continue studying in, or fighting for, the only country they have ever known with a legitimate path to U.S. citizenship. Our country needs its passage to ensure the United States will be more militarily and financially secure as a result of the invaluable contribution that these DREAMERS will provide to their fellow Americans," said Diana Sen, HNBA President.



As one looked around the hearing room, the visual was a sea of DREAMers, listening intently to each witness. They spent the previous night sleeping in a shelter provided by St. Stephens and the Incarnation Episcopal Church. During the hearing, Claudine Martinez noted, "Sitting alongside these persevering, courageous DREAMers, listening to the testimony of Secretary Napolitano and Duncan, brings into full focus the reality that America must not squander the exceptional talent these DREAMers provide our country."

Following the hearing, hundreds of DREAMers were invited to a reception with

Senator Durbin, where he addressed them, "I believe in all of you, and I want you to believe in this country."

JUNE 29th Post-Hearing Activities



The day after the hearing, on June 29th, a special graduation ceremony took place for the DREAMers at the Kennedy Caucus Room in the Senate Russell building. More than 200 DREAMers filled the caucus room to participate in the ceremony. Mandeep Chahal, a pre-med student from the University of California Davis (UC Davis) opened the ceremony with an outstanding speech that expressed the emotional toll DREAMers endure. At the graduation, there was a subset of DREAMers currently facing deportation.



Jose Antonio Vargas, Commencement Speaker

Journalist, and Pulitzer Prize winner, Jose Antonio Vargas, was chosen as the graduation commencement speaker because he recently disclosed his own undocumented status. He came to the United States as a young child and only learned of his status at the age of 16, so not only can he relate with these other young DREAMers, he is an example of what these young people can achieve. In his remarks, he referenced a historical subclass of people affected by the current broken immigration system when he called the current

plight of DREAMers the "21st century underground railroad."

After eight students shared their cases of deportation, U.S. Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) gave an inspiring speech on how he will continue to work for this legislation until the DREAM Act is approved. The energy of Senator Durbin's remarks, combined with the DREAMers' presentations, set the stage for the march that followed to the White House.



Police escort organized by the DREAMers.

The DREAMers single-handedly organized a rally outside the White House, with an escort for their march from the Capitol by the Washington D.C. police department, who stopped the traffic as the students chanted "Education, Not Deportation." Cars on the street honked and cheered for DREAMers who walked down Pennsylvania Avenue wearing graduation gowns.



Once the DREAMers arrived at the White House, those who faced deportation lined up holding a chain that symbolized their current situation. The energy of the youth encouraged tourists to join the cause and chant along with them. The voices of the students were heard all over the world as media surrounded the DREAM Act movement. The onus is on Congress to move quickly to pass the DREAM Act. Use this inspiring story to get involved and join our [action campaign](#).

Click [here](#) for the full photo gallery of the DREAM events.

The HNBA is an incorporated, not-for-profit, national membership organization that represents the interests of the more than 100,000 attorneys, judges, law professors, legal professionals, and law students of Hispanic descent in the United States and its territories. For more information about the HNBA, please visit www.hnba.com.