



## Committee on Migration

c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB

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### **STATEMENT ON THE DREAM ACT**

**ARCHBISHOP JOSE GOMEZ**

**Coadjutor Archbishop of Los Angeles**

**Chairman, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration**

**November 17, 2010**

I am grateful to be here today to speak on behalf of the DREAM Act, which would benefit thousands of young people here in the United States.

I understand that the issue of immigration is a controversial one and one which the nation has grappled with for many years. To date, our elected officials have not been able to come to a fruitful compromise, one which protects the integrity of our nation's borders and security but also provides a humane solution for the millions of persons now in limbo. It might take more time before the nation reaches a consensus on how best to fix our national immigration system.

At this current moment, however, our federal elected officials can provide a remedy for a very vulnerable group of immigrants—young persons who entered the United States with their parents years ago. Their futures are limited because of their undocumented status, yet they have so much to give to our communities and nation.

These young people entered the United States as children, following the direction of their parents, as we would all do in the same situation. The United States is the only country that they know. They have incredible talent and energy and are waiting for the chance to fully contribute their skills to our country. We would be foolhardy to deny them that chance.



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The United States is a great country because it is a land of opportunity. We have given newcomers the opportunity to work hard and be successful, and it has benefited our country immensely.

Today, I ask our elected officials in Congress to remember how we are all immigrants or descendants of immigrants and that we, too, have benefited from this opportunity and the American values of fairness, compassion, and hard work. With the passage of the DREAM Act, we can welcome a new generation of Americans who will one day become the leaders of our communities.

I also ask our officials in Congress to put aside politics in this instance and to vote on the merits of the proposal. There are times when a proposal should be enacted because, simply put, it is the right thing to do. This is one of them. On behalf of the U.S. Catholic bishops and thousands of young persons across the country, I urge Congress to enact the DREAM Act.

Thank you.