

Sample Letter or Email to Request an Appointment

The Honorable (Member of Congress Name)
United States Senate (or United States House of Representatives)
District office address and city
Fax number or email address: [This letter should be faxed or e-mailed, not mailed]

Dear Senator (Last Name) or Dear Representative (Last Name):

As a constituent of [your State or your District], [your Diocese or Parish] is writing to request a meeting with you during the upcoming Thanksgiving recess. [Your Parish and/or Diocese] is also working in collaboration with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Justice for Immigrants Campaign, which has taken a strong position in support of the DREAM Act and Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

We would like to talk with you about the urgent need for passage of the DREAM Act during Lame Duck Session of congress and share the stories of the young people that are directly affected by this issue.

We hope you will take the time to meet with us and look forward to hearing back from you soon. Please contact [your organizational contact] to set up a meeting. They can be reached at [phone and e-mail]. We will also follow up with your office.

Sincerely,

Name
Parish/diocese
City, State
Phone and e-mail



The DREAM Act: Building the Momentum for Immigration Reform

The DREAM Act is an important component of immigration reform and we expect it to be part of the broad reforms that Congress will debate this year. It shows that the political will needed to achieve comprehensive immigration reform is growing and that leadership across the board is committed to getting immigration reform done.

The “Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act” (DREAM Act) is bipartisan legislation that has been introduced by *Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Richard Lugar (R-IN) (S. 729) and Representatives Howard Berman (D-CA) and Lincoln Díaz-Balart (R-FL) (H.R. 1751) and several other Republican and Democratic Representatives. This bill, which has consistently received bipartisan support since its first introduction in 2001, benefits talented immigrant children who have long-term residency in the U.S and who complete at least 2 years of college or military service.*

Under the DREAM Act, individuals would qualify for *conditional* permanent resident status if they:

- came to the U.S. prior to the age of 16 (and are no older than the age of 35-[Senate version only](#));
- have lived in the U.S. for at least five years before the passage of the bill;
- graduate from a U.S. high school; and
- can demonstrate “good moral character,” a common immigration law term that means that the individual is not a security risk, has not committed any crimes, and is not inadmissible or removable on other grounds.

These qualifying children would then have six years of conditional permanent resident status to complete at least two years of college or military service. Only after meeting these requirements, would they be granted *full* permanent residence (a green card). The DREAM Act also restores the right of states to provide in-state tuition (regardless of immigration status) without being penalized by the federal government and if they find it to be in their state’s best interests.

The DREAM Act is about common sense solutions to fixing our broken immigration system. Placing higher education and citizenship out of reach for hard-working immigrant students does not force them to leave our country—the only country they

call home. Instead, it forces them to remain in the underground workforce while America is deprived of the increased economic productivity and the tax revenues provided by a better-educated workforce.

It's time to restore the American ideal of equal opportunity for these young people who want to be productive contributors to our society. The DREAM Act is an important component in the fight to reform our immigration system in a manner that strengthens our economic competitiveness, upholds our values as a nation of immigrants, and restores the rule of law.

*For more information contact **Grisella M. Martinez**, Legislative Director at gmartinez@immigrationforum.org.*



AgJOBS: Food For Thought, Fuel for the Economy

The Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits and Security Act (AgJOBS), is a bipartisan bill introduced by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (*D-CA*) (*S. 1038*) and Representatives Howard Berman (*D-CA*) and Adam Putnam (*R-FL*) (*H.R.2414*) that brings together a broad spectrum of interests and serves as a model for what we can accomplish when we recognize that practical solutions on immigration reform are needed and wanted by the American public. The support of AgJOBS by community leaders, labor unions, civil rights organizations, religious groups, employers, and farmworkers themselves is recognition that agriculture communities have specific and unique needs and that AgJOBS is a critical part of comprehensive immigration reform.

AgJOBS is the result of over a decade of carefully negotiated agreements between business and labor and has 2 key components:

1. It makes long-term agricultural workers eligible to apply for temporary legal status (a “blue card”) and then if certain very specific additional factors are met, such as continuing employment in agriculture, eligible for permanent resident status (a “green card”).
2. It reforms the H-2A temporary foreign agricultural worker program by streamlining the hiring process, improving housing benefits, and providing better legal protections.

Our nation’s agricultural “ecosystem” is part of a complex network, both domestically and internationally, that is interconnected with virtually every aspect of our economy, from actual production and delivery to commodities trading and global market competition. The economic impacts affect farm equipment manufacturing, packaging, processing, transportation, marketing, lending, and insurance. For example:

- The U.S. has approximately 20% of the international market share for agricultural goods.
- For every 1 agricultural worker job, up to 3 additional jobs are created for U.S. citizens.
- Eliminating immigrant workers from the dairy industry alone would reduce U.S. milk production by 29.5 billion pounds and the number of U.S. farms by 4,532. Retail milk prices would increase by an estimated 61%.
- Approximately 80% of Florida’s 150,000 agricultural workers are undocumented immigrants. Their work provides up to 90% of the fresh

domestic tomatoes that Americans eat between the months of December and May and are a part of a \$1.6 billion a year business.

A well-functioning and competitive agriculture industry is critical to ensuring economic viability for the U.S. and all its workers. Our agricultural industry needs a stable and legal workforce to continue to provide the food that every American family relies upon. Undocumented agricultural workers need the ability to come out of the shadows and not live in fear of unfair labor practices. AgJOBS is a win-win piece of legislation benefiting workers, employers and the economy at large.

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