Issue: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Passage of the national DREAM Act\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Author(s)/Sponsor(s): \_\_\_Danny Edgel and Oscar Aguirre\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Endorsements: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Western Votes\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Action Agenda Item Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_DREAM Act\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Describe the Issue (what is the problem & what is the solution).

With the full name Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, this proposal would offer a path to citizenship to children and young adults that were brought into the United States by their parents from foreign countries. An estimate of over two million youth are potentially eligible for a path to citizenship under this proposal[[1]](#footnote-1), many of whom will be immediately eligible as a result of their higher education degrees and the rest of whom will be eligible upon completion of their degree. Furthermore, the DREAM Act would provide an incentive and opportunity for those that have resided in the United States for at least five years to meet the educational requirement and achieve full citizenship.[[2]](#footnote-2) Allowing students a pathway to citizenship also allows students a pathway to higher education. Once these individuals are legal citizens of the United State they will be eligible to sign up for the FAFSA and receive funds from the State Need Grant.

The current issue is that students and their parents need a valid social security number in order to fill out a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form, meaning undocumented students are barred from receiving funds from the State Need Grant and many other sources. Placing a barrier in front of an already marginalized community from attaining higher education is forcing a permanent underclass. Undocumented immigrants pay taxes each time they make any sort of purchase and on top of that contribute heavily to federal, state, and local taxes. In 2010 alone it was reported that undocumented immigrants collectively paid approximately 10.6 billion dollars in taxes3, money that they will never get to use. Not only is this wrong out of principle, but is a fiscally irresponsible move. Our states have been investing time and money in these students from k-12; it is illogical to withdraw support right when these same students’ intelligence and skills are on the cusp of being utilized to their full potential.

There are approximately 65,000 undocumented students who graduate from US High Schools each year4. Allowing the fraction of these individual who decide pursued higher education to apply for the FAFSA would make a huge difference in the lives of these students, but make a small impact on the current total funding available. The passage of the Dream Act would send the message that we care about our students and if you put in the effort you should have the opportunity to succeed regardless of your background.

2) Please fill out a Strategy Chart.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goals** | **Organizational Considerations** | **Constituents, Allies, & Opponents** | **Targets** | **Tactics** |
| Pass and enact the United States DREAM Act.Have S.744 or HR.15 brought to the floor of the House of Representatives for a vote.Passage and Enactment of S.744 or HR.15.Provide an opportunity for all students and potential students in the U.S. access to an education and to climb the economic ladder. | USSA PartnershipPartnership with ESC ClubsOrganizing a diverse and active campus coalition.Mobilizing students from districts with representatives that oppose the DREAM ActIt can also help us to reach out to students who have been traditionally underrepresented and marginalized, which can strengthen our organization and build leadership | Constituents and AlliesWWU AS Ethnic Student CenterWestern VotesRepresentative Rick Larsen | PrimaryHouse Speaker John Boehner | Mobilize the constituents of the secondary targets (opponents of S.744 and HR.15) to contact their Representative.On the annual Washington, DC lobbying trip, have our lobbyists discuss the DREAM Act and S.744/Hr.15 with WA’s congressional delegation.Organize a Day of Action with other AS clubs such as Western Votes and various ESC clubs. 1)Phonebanking, Letter Writing (Letters to the Editors, Letters to elected officials, Emails, Petition Signing, Visual Campaign (Photos, electronic scrap book) 2)Social Media Campaign (FB, Twitter, Instagram, tumblr), Campus Newspapers (Campus leaders Letters to the Editor, Editorials, Columns, Legislative Updates), Coordinated articles and press releases. 3) Ensuring that all persons involved in the campaign are using the same messaging and language when talking to legislators, campaigning, and using social media. 4) Encouraging students to vote by providing students with information regarding the DREAM Act and key elected officials and their role/influence  in the process |
| SecondaryRep. Cathy McMorris RodgersRep. David ReichertRep. Doc HastingsRep. Herrera-Beutler |
| OpponentsThose who believe that we need to focus on the already qualified students not receiving state financial aid.  |

3) Please explain briefly how/if this issue meets the following qualifications:

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1. Is it winnable?

Yes. The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act (S.744) has already passed the Senate with bipartisan support and there is confidence that it will pass if brought to a vote in the House of Representatives. As of right now, House Speaker John Boehner refuses to bring it to a vote, but in an age of short attention spans, immigration reform is still a conversation, so movement is possible, if not likely.

2. Does it directly impact and improve students’ lives?
The Dream Act not only gives undocumented students a pathway to citizenship, but does so in a way that emphasizes the importance of education. It will give undocumented students a greater incentive to continue in school by tying immigrant status with length of time residing in the U.S. and the requirement that the individual has received education in the country. Once the individuals have attained citizenship they will also be eligible for financial aid and thus making the prospects of higher education much more attainable. As was stated in our proposal for the WA State Dream Act, “Education is a way for people to develop the skills and connections they need in order to pursue future careers; careers where they have the potential to contribute to society as a whole. Allowing all students the opportunity to join in higher education promotes diversity on our campuses. Students do not just learn in the classroom, but also from the interactions they have with other students. Diversification leads to greater tolerance and understanding.”

3. Does it have a clear target?

Yes. Although we will not take a stance on the rest of S.744 and primarily favor clean DREAM Act legislation, we acknowledge the reality that S.744 is our clearest and most likely means to achieve the end of a path to citizenship for undocumented students. Therefore, our target is S.744 or a reconciled bill that includes the DREAM Act without significant negative ramifications for students or undocumented citizens.

4. Does it build a measurable amount of power?
As we saw with our WA State DREAM Act, there are a lot of students who care about this issue documented or not. This is a complex issue, but one that at its core is about promoting equal opportunity and directly relates to providing accessible and affordable higher education. An issue that can definitely build a measurable amount of power.

5. Does it have a clear and realistic time frame?

Since S.744 passed in this session, our time frame spans from now until the end of this Congressional Session, which ends in January of 2015 when the 114th Congress gets sworn into office.

6. Does it have a local/state/federal organizing and lobbying angle?
This is definitely a piece of legislation that can be advocated for at different levels of government. Although it is a federal bill in order to show our interest in the issue students must mobilize in both state and national forums. This an issue that affects students all across the country.

7. Could students build a diverse campus coalition around this issue?
Support for the DREAM Act provides a fantastic opportunity to build a diverse campus coalition as this issue directly relates to promoting equal opportunity among all people. The Ethnic Student Center at WWU is in charge of about 16 different student clubs relating to promoting multi-culturalism and could definitely be a partner in our fight for this legislation.

8. Is it likely to be debated and acted upon by the Legislature in the next year?
Yes, the Bill passed the Senate on June 27, 2013 and it is likely that it will be debated in the House this session.

9. Will it strengthen and expand efforts within WWU?
Supporting S 744 will create opportunities for the WSA to strengthen current relationships as well as develop new ones. Examples in the past include our connections with OneAmerica that have come out of working on our state agenda for the Washington Dream Act. Showing our support for this bill gives us a great opportunity to stand by our goals of increased access and affordability for higher education. Our efforts are well placed on an issue that helps empower traditionally marginalized students as supporting underrepresented students, faculty, and staff is one of the WSA’s guiding principle.

10. Can you provide background information and the current context of the issue?
The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act was introduced into the Senate by Sen. Schumer on April 16, 2013. The bill was referred to in hearings by several different committees: the US Senate Committee on the Judiciary, the US Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and the US Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship. Initially referred to in the Committee on the Judiciary it was ordered to be reported with amendments favorably. After being recommitted to the Senate Committee on Judiciary twice for amendments, it passed the Senate 68-32.
The DREAM Act was first introduced into the Senate on August 1, 2001 by Dick Durbin and Orrin Hatch. Since then it has been amended and reintroduced over five times in both chambers of Congress.

11. What creative and/or innovative tactics could we employ to engage the media and excite new students around this issue?

After the success of our Day of Action to mobilize students around the Washington State DREAM Act, we could partner with various ESC clubs and Western Votes to hold a similar event aimed at contacting Congress members to support S.744, particularly the Dream Act portion of the bill.

1. : MPI analysis of CPS, 2006-2008 pooled, augmented with assignments of legal status to noncitizens by

Jeffrey S. Passel, Pew Hispanic Center. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/DREAM-Insight-July2010.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/DREAM-Insight-July2010.pdf>
3<http://www.itep.org/immigration/>
4<http://www.statisticbrain.com/undocumented-student-statistics/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)