



**The National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
Expresses Support for Passage of the
Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM)
Act of 2010**

December 2, 2010

The National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) continues to support passage of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act (S. 3999) and commends Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid for his tireless leadership in promoting passage of this bill.

Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities place a high value on education and many parents sacrifice to provide educational opportunities for their children. For those AAPIs who have been forced to live in the shadows of US immigration policy, the DREAM Act is a step in the right direction. The DREAM Act provides an opportunity for undocumented youth to become eligible for legal status, pursue higher education, and continue to make valuable contributions to our society.

The DREAM Act was meant to recognize that youth who entered the US as small children and have been educated and raised in this country should have the opportunity to put their knowledge, talent, and skills to use within their adopted homeland for the betterment of themselves and our society. The DREAM Act would make this possible by providing youth who can demonstrate that they are a "person of good moral character", graduate of high school or holder of a GED certificate, and plan to continue their careers by completing at least two years of a bachelor's degree or military service in good standing, a pathway to conditional nonimmigrant status. NAPAWF is encouraged that the current bill keeps this basic intent of this law intact so that our immigrant youth can continue to build upon their successful academic careers in hopes that they may eventually obtain permanent residency and US citizenship.

However, NAPAWF is disappointed by the amendments that have been introduced to the bill that lowers the age for eligibility to 30 years, restricts the relevant deadlines to 1 year windows, restrict access to health care benefits, and places onerous background check and biometric requirements on eligible individuals. We believe that these amendments only serve to reduce the number of DREAM beneficiaries and increase barriers for otherwise eligible students. NAPAWF also asks that individuals be presented with both military and school options weighted equally so that students can make the best decision for their future. Finally, adequate protections must be included within the DREAM Act so that enlisted immigrant women will not have their status jeopardized if they bring a claim of sexual assault or rape against a perpetrator.

Thus, while we believe that the DREAM Act is a positive step forward, NAPAWF continues to push our legislators to do more to provide real solutions for the US immigration problems.

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The National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum is building a movement to advance social justice and human rights for API women and girls in the United States. We implement our mission by creating the leadership, political power, and visibility of API women and girls through community and public education, advocacy, collaboration, and grassroots multi-issue organizing. Founded in 1996, we remain the only national, multi-issue advocacy organization for API women and girls.