The DREAM Act and College Access

**Text 4: The Dream Act: Objections and Concerns**

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| Notes  | Text  |
| As you read, take notes or mark your text in order to answer these questions: What position do these critics take on the DREAM Act? What reasons and evidence do they provide to support their position? How do you evaluate the reasons and evidence they offer? | When the DREAM Act was last debated in Congress, opponents raised a number of objections. For instance, Senator Sessions circulated his objections as “Ten Things You Need to Know about S.3827, The DREAM Act.” As states passed their versions, voters voiced their opposition and concerns by responding to with comments and letters to their local papers. Here is a summary of those objections and concerns: **Education, then Immigration: There’s No Need for the Dream Act** Some criticisms of the DREAM Act make the point that the 1. S. should not be the world’s college:
	* **Other nations should be producing college graduates**. Students who want to attend college can return to their home countries and attend there. This will help to grow those education systems.
	* **The DREAM Act promotes “brain drain**”: In many countries there are major shortages of educated workers that can help those nations develop. The U. S. should not be a part of a “brain drain” by making college education so easily available.
	* **Educated immigrants are welcome”** As college graduates with skills foreign-­‐born students would be more successful as legal immigrants to the United States. Students who want to attend college in the U.S. can return and apply for legal entry.

**How Fair and Effective will the DREAM Act Be?** Some objections challenge the idea that the Act will create a next generation of college-­‐educated immigrants who can and will contribute to the well-­‐being of the U.S.: * + **The DREAM Act is NOT limited to young people.** Proponents of the DREAM Act frequently claim the bill offers relief to high school students seeking to attend college, but current proposals would allow illegal aliens up to the age of **35** to apply for the educational benefits. This is too wide an age window.
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* **Illegal aliens will be eligible for student loans, work-­‐study jobs, and other forms of federal financial aid, even though those resources are scarce for the children of legal residents.** They will also be eligible for publicly funded tutoring and counseling. This will occur at a time when many

U. S. public colleges and universities have to cut back on scholarships and support programs. Passing the Act will mean less support and fewer opportunities for legal students.

* **Illegal aliens will get in-­‐state tuition benefits that ought to go to students who are legal citizens first**: The DREAM Act will allow illegal aliens to qualify for in-­‐state tuition, which is often a quarter to a third of what out-­‐of-­‐state students have to pay. This is a benefit that should be offered to U.S. citizens and legally present first.
* **The DREAM Act will not insure more educated immigrant citizens.** The law does not require that an illegal alien finish any degree (Vocational, Two-­‐Year, or Bachelor’s Degree). To qualify for citizenship, the alien must prove only that they finished 2 years of a bachelor’s degree program, not that they completed any program or earned any degree. Research shows that the real benefits come when a person gets a degree, not when they attend. A serious program would require that students graduate before they qualify for citizenship.
* **The DREAM Act protects any alien if they simply submit a DREAM Act application.** The bill forbids Homeland Security from removing “**any alien** who has a pending application for conditional status”. This loophole will open the floodgates for applications that could stay open for many years or be challenged as a delay tactic to prevent the illegal aliens’ removal from the United States. This could clog the admissions systems of public colleges and universities and distract them from processing and supporting legal applicants.