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Dare to Dream: Open Paths to Higher Education for All Children

Heated rhetoric surrounds our nation's debates on immigration – and the importance of education for all children is often lost in the clamor. But good policymaking depends on quality information. Here, then, is a set of key facts to inform the debate about further education and options for young people who were brought to the United States by undocumented parents and have graduated from U.S. high schools.

#1: Pathways to higher education reward young people who have worked hard and want to contribute further to our society. Under current policy alternatives, including the DREAM Act that is now under consideration, for example, 60,000 young people who are high school graduates would have the opportunity to earn higher education degrees and fill the gaps in engineering, science, mathematics, technology and medicine. (See also [LULAC](#) and [MALDEF](#).)

#2: Such policies do not tend to raise revenues or displace native-born students. In fact, school revenues tend to rise. Since 2001, 10 states, including Texas and California, have passed laws that allow undocumented students who graduate from in-state high schools to qualify for in-state tuition. Research [has found](#) : “Such legislation has not precipitated a large influx of new immigrant students, displaced native-born students or been a financial drain on the education system. In fact, these measures tend to increase school revenues by bringing in tuition from students who otherwise would not be in college” (College Board, 2009).

#3: The economic benefits of opening pathways to higher education far outweigh the costs. Study after study shows that [raising college graduation rates results in increased income](#) – and higher tax revenues. Increased high school and college graduation rates also reduce public health and welfare costs.

#4: Raising graduation rates and college participation makes sense at a time of recession. According to a study by UCLA, students who would be impacted by measures such as the DREAM Act could [add between \\$1.4 and 3.6 trillion in taxable income](#) to the U.S. economy.

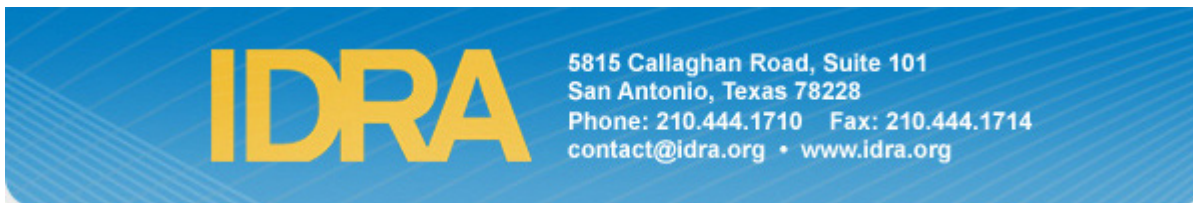
#5. Opening paths to higher education is consistent with our nation's goals and aspirations for children and has earned cross-sector support. Such policy options are supported by, among scores of other leaders, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; Former Secretary of State Colin Powell; Former Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez; Former Illinois Governor Jim Edgar; and David S.C. Chu, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness under George W. Bush. In a statement on behalf of the Department of Education, [Secretary Duncan said](#): “By opening the American Dream of college for these bright, talented youth, we will unleash an academic force into the U.S. higher-education system.”

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IDRA works hand-in-hand with hundreds of thousands of educators and families each year in communities and classrooms around the country. All our work rests on an unwavering commitment to creating self-renewing schools that value and promote the success of students of all backgrounds.

We are a small organization with a powerful mission: to create schools that work for *all* children.



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