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October 23, 2007

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the American Bar Association, I write to urge you to vote in favor of cloture for S. 2205, the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act of 2007 (DREAM Act), and to support final passage of the bill.

The ABA supports a path to lawful permanent residence and U.S. citizenship for undocumented persons who entered the United States as minors and have developed significant ties to the United States, subject to a good moral character requirement and security screening. The DREAM Act, a bipartisan bill sponsored by Senators Durbin, Hagel and Lugar, would provide individuals who entered the country as children and who meet certain strict criteria an opportunity to pursue legal residence.

The DREAM Act does not give this opportunity away; it requires individuals to earn it through their past, present and future actions. To even be eligible for conditional legal residence under the DREAM Act, an individual must be able to demonstrate the following: they have been admitted to an institution of higher education, graduated high school or earned a GED; entered the country before the age of 16; lived here for at least five years; have demonstrated good moral character; and have no criminal record. In order to have the conditional status removed, the individual must have completed at least two years of college toward a four-year degree or two years of military service, and have met certain other requirements.

The majority of these young people were brought to the United States by their parents, with no say in that decision, and for many it is the only home they have ever known. They have actively contributed to their schools and communities, have stayed out of trouble, and seek to pursue opportunities through college or the military that will enable them to fulfill their potential and further contribute to our society. It is in our nation's best interests to provide these individuals with an opportunity to earn legal permanent residence and that is what the DREAM Act will accomplish.

We strongly urge you to support cloture and passage of the DREAM Act.

Sincerely,



Denise A. Cardman  
Acting Director