



Illinois

DREAM Act

Chicago, IL – On August 1, 2011 at Benito Juarez Community Academy, Governor Pat Quinn signed into law the Illinois DREAM Act, a provision that will support college aspirations of children of immigrants in Illinois.

Before heading to Governor Quinn's desk for approval, the bill (SB 2185; Cullerton/Acevedo – Public Act 97-0233) passed the state Senate in early May by a wide margin (45-11) that involved bipartisan support. In the state House, it was approved in a much closer vote (60-54).

Illinois is the first state to approve a state-specific DREAM Act.

The Illinois DREAM Act – which borrows its name from a similar piece of federal legislation – creates an Illinois DREAM Fund and a nine-member Illinois DREAM Commission, to be appointed by the Governor with Senate consent. Once these are established, a privately-funded scholarship source and the option to invest in the state's 529 college savings and prepaid tuition programs will become available to the children of immigrants, including undocumented students who graduate from Illinois high schools. To address the need for guidance on matters of postsecondary options, the Act requires high school counselors and college admission and financial aid officers to be trained on educational opportunities for immigrant youth.

"The Governor has announced that he hopes to fill the panel by mid-

September," reported Katharine Gricevich, Director of Government Relations at Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) in her *State Legislative Update* of August 4, 2011.¹ Members of the Illinois DREAM Commission will represent the geographic and ethnic diversity of the State, including students, college and university administrators and faculty, and other individuals committed to advancing the educational opportunities of the children of immigrants. Individuals with an interest in serving on the DREAM Fund Commission may learn more about the Commissioners' duties and submit nomination forms at <http://appointments.illinois.gov/appointmentsDetail.cfm?id=417>.

As it becomes available, more information about the Illinois DREAM Commission and Illinois DREAM Fund will be posted on the official website of the State of Illinois (www.illinois.gov). Updates and resources will also be added to the website of the *Office of Pathways to College and Careers* at Chicago Public Schools (www.chooseyourfuture.org). In the meantime, students and families seeking assistance may wish to visit the Web page of the *Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights* (www.ICIRR.org) to access a guide for undocumented students in Illinois.²

¹ This summary was adapted from Gricevich, K. (2011). ISAC State Legislative Update. Retrieved August 4, 2011 from www.collegezone.com/elibrary/2290_2567.htm.

² As of this publication's print date, ICIRR guides and resources are not commissioned by the Illinois DREAM Commission, are not produced by the State of Illinois, and neither the State nor Illinois Student Assistance Commission is responsible for their content.)