

Division of Government & Public Affairs

The Need to Pass Comprehensive Immigration Reform

The higher education community has long supported bipartisan efforts to address the serious problems with our current immigration system. While we recognize that there are many paths toward a reformed immigration system, the need to modernize it is simply too important and vital to our nation to let this opportunity pass. **We urge the House of Representatives to pass bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform legislation that can be conferenced with the Senate and ultimately signed into law by the president.**

Such legislation should address many critical issues, including:

DREAM Act

- Thousands of undocumented students graduate each year from our high schools. While born elsewhere, they were brought here as children, raised in the U.S., and consider themselves Americans. But they remain in the shadows and are unable to work legally, and our economy is deprived of their talent.
- As in the DREAM Act, these undocumented students should be provided an expedited path to citizenship for accomplishing academic goals and/or serving in our military.
- To ensure their success, states should be permitted to offer in-state tuition to undocumented students. These students should also have access to federal student loans and the Work-Study Program.

Modernization of the Green Card Process for Advanced Degree Graduates

- Our colleges and universities attract top international students from around the world. Unfortunately, under our current outdated immigration system most cannot stay in the U.S. after graduation.
- It is crucial to our economy that we permit these talented graduates to remain here, especially those graduating with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degrees.
- We should streamline the green card system for STEM graduates and all international students with doctorate degrees so they essentially have a green card stapled to their diploma.

Modernization of Non-Immigrant Visas

- We also need to reform the non-immigrant visas system, particularly the H-1B visa, in order to enhance our recruitment and retention of high-skilled international students and employees.
- Enacting common-sense reforms would simplify the immigration process for these students and employees, many of whom are critical to the education and research missions of our institutions.

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