

## **HIGH SCHOOL IMMIGRANT YOUTH**

Immigrants make up a significant proportion of America's dropouts – nearly 30 percent. As a result, addressing the challenges that this population of children faces in graduating from high school and pursuing higher education can help make a dramatic impact in high school graduation rates overall. Unfortunately, current immigration law creates a disincentive for U.S.-raised immigrants to graduate from high school. Federal policy must ensure that the investment that states have made in the K-12 education of these young people is not wasted and that all students who graduate from our nation's schools have the opportunity to pursue higher education, regardless of immigration status.

### **Related Federal Legislation**

*Development Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, S. 774/S. 2205, and the American Dream Act, H.R. 1275.* The DREAM Act and American Dream Act are bipartisan legislative proposals that would strengthen graduation rates among foreign-born students, who make up a quarter of America's dropouts. Specifically, the legislation would permit certain immigrant students who have grown up in the U.S. the opportunity to become eligible for citizenship if they graduate from high school and pursue higher education or military service. This would provide critical motivation for certain children of immigrants to graduate from high school, continue their education, and further contribute to America's economy.

### **Related Research and Publications**

*New Estimates of Unauthorized Youth Eligible for Legal Status under the DREAM Act* (2006)  
Jeanne Batalova and Michael Fix, Migration Policy Institute  
[http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/Backgrounder1\\_Dream\\_Act.pdf](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/Backgrounder1_Dream_Act.pdf)

This backgrounder discusses the major features of the DREAM Act and provides estimates of the number of young undocumented immigrants who are likely to be eligible to earn a path citizenship if the DREAM Act were to become law.

*Wasted Talent and Broken Dreams: The Lost Potential of Undocumented Students* (2007)  
Roberto G. Gonzalez, Immigration Policy Center, American Immigration Law Foundation  
<http://immigration.server263.com/index.php?content=f071001>

*Wasted Talent and Broken Dreams* synthesizes the barriers facing certain undocumented children in their pursuit for higher education. The document highlights the overlooked potential of these children to the nation's economy. Finally, it makes the case for federal changes to support a path to citizenship for certain undocumented youth.

*Recent Developments in Undocumented College Student Issues (2005-Present)* (2007)  
Michael A. Olivas, Institute for Higher Education Law and Governance, University of Houston Law Center  
<http://www.law.uh.edu/ihehg/undocumented/homepage.html>

This article summarizes recent national and state-related developments affecting undocumented youth and DREAM Act-eligible students.

## Recommended Federal Policy Experts

Josh Bernstein  
Director of Federal Policy  
National Immigration Law Center  
Washington, DC  
(202) 216-0261  
[bernstein@nilc.org](mailto:bernstein@nilc.org)  
[www.nilc.org](http://www.nilc.org)

Melissa Lazarín  
Director of Education Policy  
First Focus  
Washington, DC  
(202) 657-0681  
[MelissaL@firstfocus.net](mailto:MelissaL@firstfocus.net)  
[www.firstfocus.net](http://www.firstfocus.net)

Michael Fix  
Vice President and Director of Studies  
Migration Policy Institute  
Washington, DC  
(202) 266-1924  
[mfix@migrationpolicy.org](mailto:mfix@migrationpolicy.org)  
[www.migrationpolicy.org](http://www.migrationpolicy.org)