



American Hope Act of 2017: Bill Summary

Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D - Illinois) introduced the [American Hope Act of 2017](#) on July 28, 2017 with [116](#) Democratic cosponsors. The bill would provide young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children, often referred to as Dreamers, with protection from deportation and an opportunity to obtain legal status if they meet certain requirements.

The American Hope Act would provide 800,000 young undocumented immigrants who are recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), as well as other eligible young undocumented immigrants who were brought to America as children, with a permanent, legislative solution that allows them to stay legally in the U.S.

What the American Hope Act Does

- The bill would create a conditional permanent resident status for young undocumented immigrants that is valid for up to eight years. The conditional permanent resident status would protect them from deportation, allow them to work legally in the U.S. and permit them to travel outside the country.
- To qualify for conditional permanent resident status, young undocumented immigrants would need to meet the following requirements:
 - Establish that they came to the U.S. before the age of 18 and have continuously lived in the U.S. since December 31, 2016;
 - Pass government background checks; and
 - Demonstrate that they have not been convicted of certain criminal offenses.
- A Dreamer's conditional permanent resident status could be changed to that of a lawful permanent resident, or green card holder, by:
 - Maintaining conditional permanent resident status for at least three years;
 - Demonstrating that they have not abandoned continuous residence in the U.S.;
 - Passing government background checks; and
 - Establishing that he or she has not been convicted of certain criminal offenses during the period they have held conditional permanent resident status.
- The period of time for which a Dreamer was granted DACA would count toward the three-year period required to change status to that of a lawful permanent resident.
- Generally, a Dreamer would have to complete five years as a conditional permanent resident or lawful permanent resident or some combination of the two before being eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship.
- The bill would permit Dreamers with conditional permanent resident status to obtain federal assistance for higher education, including federal grants, work-study programs and student loans.
- The bill includes the following provisions to assist Dreamers with the processes of becoming conditional permanent residents and, eventually, U.S. citizens:

- Permits the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to establish a grant program for non-profit organizations to assist eligible applicants to apply for conditional permanent resident status;
- Establishes a Presidential Award for Business Leadership in Promoting American Citizenship for companies and other organizations that assist their employees and members with the naturalization process; and
- Directs the Secretary of Education to develop an electronic program that provides instructions on the English language.

Why the American Hope Act is Constructive

- **The American Hope Act is a legislative solution.** The bill is a legislative solution to permanently address the fate of at least an estimated [1.8 million](#) young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children and have lived in the U.S. for most of their lives.
- **The American Hope Act protects Dreamers.** The bill would provide young undocumented immigrants who have grown up in our communities in the U.S. since they were children with protection from deportation and an opportunity to become American citizens if they follow the law.
- **The American Hope Act helps America's economy.** The bill would allow young undocumented immigrants to continue to contribute to their communities and the economy by working legally, paying their fair share of taxes and building business that employ American workers. For instance, over the next ten years, young undocumented immigrants who have DACA will contribute [\\$433.4 billion](#) to the GDP.

Main Differences from the Dream Act of 2017

- The [Dream Act of 2017](#) is a bipartisan bill introduced by Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina) and Dick Durbin (D-Illinois) in the U.S. Senate and Congresswomen Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Florida) and Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-California) in the U.S. House of Representatives that would provide Dreamers with protection from deportation and an opportunity to obtain legal status if they meet certain requirements. The Dream Act of 2017 differs primarily from the American Hope Act as follows:
 - The American Hope Act would make more Dreamers eligible for legal status by allowing Dreamers who were brought to the U.S. before December 31, 2016 to qualify, whereas the Dream Act would allow only Dreamers who were brought to the U.S. at least four years before the enactment of the bill to qualify.
 - The Dream Act requires that Dreamers graduate from or complete two years of a higher education program, complete at least two years of military service, or be employed for at least three years to become lawful permanent residents. The American Hope Act has no such requirement.
 - The American Hope Act provides support to help Dreamers apply for conditional permanent resident status, learn about naturalization, and improve their English through grant programs and other initiatives. The Dream Act does not provide such support, but requires that Dreamers demonstrate an ability to read, write and speak English and knowledge of U.S. civics to become lawful permanent residents.