



Advocacy Update

Sent June 29, 2011

Support the DREAM Act Today

Yesterday was an important day for immigration reform: the Senate held a first-ever hearing on the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. In November 2010 we sent out a Social Justice alert calling on sisterhood women to urge senators to support the DREAM Act. It had passed in the House of Representatives and had bipartisan support in the Senate, but then failed because of a filibuster.

Yearly, the approximately 65,000 law-abiding young people brought to the United States as children by undocumented immigrant parents face obstacles to attending college, getting jobs, or entering the military services. Passage of the DREAM Act would provide youth, who have lived in the U.S for a minimum of five years, are of good moral character, and have graduated from high school an opportunity to earn permanent residence and eventual citizenship by attending college for at least two years or joining a military service.

Yesterday's hearing provides an excellent opportunity to call on your members of Congress to help these young people fulfill their dreams. Urge your senators and representatives to support the DREAM Act (H.R.1842/S.952). The Capitol Switchboard can be reached at 202.224.3121.

Help Make Marijuana Legal

Last week Representative Barney Frank introduced a bi-partisan bill, the Ending Federal Marijuana Prohibition Act of 2011 (H.R. 2306), which would legalize marijuana. If the bill passes, marijuana would be removed from federal scheduling under the Controlled Substances Act, letting states pass their own laws, regulations, and taxes - just as they can with alcohol and tobacco. Other benefits would include removing obstacles to scientific research and making it possible for doctors to prescribe cannabis. Current federal marijuana legislation has led to many thousands of arrests yearly - frequently for possession of small amounts of marijuana for personal use. Moreover, like alcohol prohibition, marijuana prohibition is empowering organized crime and putting both citizens and law enforcement in harm's way.

Take action today! Ask your representative to support Rep. Frank's marijuana legalization bill.

In a June 16, 2011 Op-Ed in the New York Times, Former President Jimmy Carter urged the United States government to "Call Off the Global Drug War" by supporting and enacting the reforms recommended by the Global Commission on Drug Policy initiative. [Read President Carter's op-ed](#) for more information on the initiative, his observations of men imprisoned for marijuana infractions, and his discussion on making "drug policies more humane and more effective."

An interesting [letter to the editor](#), responding to President Carter on "Women and Drug Policy," by Rachel Roth, points out that "women go to prison, too, and that women are even more likely than men to be sent to prison for low-level, nonviolent drug offenses." The letter speaks of the "devastating consequences" for the children of imprisoned women and concludes that "The disproportionate impact of drug laws on poor women of color and vulnerable families is one more reason our country should close the door on the failed drug war."

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