NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

After DREAM Act failure, advocates remain determined

Mark Pattison Catholic News Service | Dec. 20, 2010

WASHINGTON -- The Senate's inability to overcome a threatened filibuster Dec. 18 scuttled passage of the DREAM Act, prompting immigrant advocates to pledge to push forward on immigration reform next year with a new Congress and fight for what one immigrant leader termed the "respect we deserve."

The bill would have given young people brought to the United States as children by their undocumented parents a path to citizenship under a strict set of requirements. Under the measure, an estimated 2.1 million children of undocumented parents would have had an opportunity to go to college or join the military and legalize their status.

The U.S. bishops had long been supporters of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act, which passed the House Dec. 9. Four U.S. bishops, including Cardinal Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles, took part in a Dec. 17 conference call with reporters to argue for passage in the Senate.

The Senate needed 60 votes to break the filibuster, but fell five short, with 55 against it and 41 for it.

"Catholic Charities USA is deeply disappointed that the Senate rejected the vote on this important piece of legislation," said a Dec. 20 statement from Fr. Larry Snyder, Catholic Charities' president and CEO.

"Honor students, class presidents, athletes and responsible community members who desire a brighter future by continuing their education came up short this past weekend. Now, having entered our country as small children, they will continue to be cast into the shadows until, as a nation, we can find a way to address our broken immigration system," Snyder said.

"Today's vote on the DREAM Act, which ironically was held on the very day in which migrant communities around the world commemorate international migrant's day, represents the latest example of a failed political and legislative strategy when it comes to immigrant rights and immigration policy," said Oscar Chacon, executive director of the National Alliance for Latin American and Caribbean Communities, in a Dec. 18 statement.

"In particular, Latino immigrant communities must be creative and effective when it comes to our own organizing, empowerment and alliance building capacity in order to achieve the respect we deserve, but that so far has been denied to us," Chacon said.

Republican opponents of the DREAM Act saw the measure was a backdoor into granting amnesty for all illegal immigrants. "Treating the symptoms of the problem might make us feel better ... but it can allow the underlying problem to metastasize. Unfortunately, that's what's happening at our border," said Sen. Jon Kyl, R-Ariz, said in a statement.

But Kjersten Forseth, executive director of ProgressNow Colorado, said: "The DREAM Act is a sensible and compassionate solution to a major problem in American immigration law, which has been routinely held

hostage by the right wing and used in their campaign to demonize their political opponents."

"Fixing unintended problems in the law with regard to children in America, so they can attend college or serve our country, is good for our economy," Forseth said in a Dec. 18 statement.

The 55-41 Senate vote was largely along party lines. Five Democrats voted to support the filibuster, and three Republicans voted to block it.

AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka call the filibuster "a disappointing endorsement of injustice and inequality."

The Next Step FORWARD [2]

DONATE NOW [2]

Enjoy this article?
Help support more like it by **donating today!** [2]

Source URL (retrieved on *05/04/2015 - 06:20*): http://ncronline.org/news/after-dream-act-failure-advocates-remain-determined

Links:
[1] http://ncrnews.org/webathon/donate/in-content
[2] http://ncrnews.org/webathon/donate/article-end