

Duckworth & Durbin call on Congress to pass Dream Act, support servicemembers

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, combat Veteran and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) joined U.S. Representative Steny Hoyer (D-MD), U.S. Representative Ruben Gallego (D-AZ), U.S. Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), U.S. Representative Salud Carbajal (D-CA) and U.S. Representative Ted Lieu (D-CA) to discuss the importance of allowing Dreamers to serve in the military. Duckworth and Durbin also called on Congress to pass the *Dream Act* to immediately shield the 800,000 DACA recipients, including 42,000 in Illinois, from deportation. Video of Duckworth's remarks is available [here](#) and video of Durbin's remarks is



available [here](#).

Key Duckworth Excerpts:

“ may come from different places and different backgrounds, but they are all here for the same reason: to serve our nation. Without their sacrifice – and without the sacrifice of all those immigrants who came before them both in and out of uniform – we wouldn’t be the great nation we are today.”

“Yet some of our leaders – including, apparently, the man who dodged the draft in Vietnam and now sits in the Oval Office – want to turn these brave men and women away from service. They want to deport them from the very same nation they risked their lives to defend. That’s downright shameful.”

“If Republicans and the President won’t , then it’s clear to me and my colleagues here that we have to do everything we can to pass the Dream Act. We simply can’t afford to stall on this any longer.”

Key Durbin Excerpts:

“Right now, there are more than 800 Dreamers serving in the U.S. military or who have signed enlistment contracts and are awaiting basic training. These brave men and women have raised their hand to serve—and to lay down their lives if necessary—for the only country they know. If Congress fails to pass the Dream Act, these young people could be forced to leave the military and be placed at risk of deportation.”

“A few weeks ago, I was at the Phoenix Military Academy, one of six military academies within Chicago Public Schools. I am proud to say that Chicago Public Schools hosts the largest Junior R.O.T.C. program in the country, with approximately 10,000 cadets. And it turns out that many of these cadets are Dreamers who want to serve their country by enlisting in the U.S. Armed Forces. But without the Dream Act, thousands of Junior R.O.T.C. cadets in Chicago and around the country will never have the chance to enlist.”

“They want nothing more than to serve and they are willing to die for the country they call home. They will make our country stronger if only we give them a chance.”

In August, Duckworth introduced several bills to protect and support Veterans and servicemembers—men and women who have proven they are willing lay down their lives defending America—from being deported or denied healthcare. Duckworth’s proposals would prohibit the administration from deporting Veterans, give legal permanent residents a path to citizenship through military service, establish naturalization offices at military training facilities and bolster VA healthcare services for Veterans.

Durbin introduced the first Dream Act in 2001. In July, he and Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) [introduced](#) the bipartisan Dream Act, which would allow young immigrants who grew up in the United States to earn lawful permanent residence and eventually American citizenship. These young people, who became known as Dreamers, have lived in America since they were children, built their lives here, and are American in every way except for their immigration status.