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Senator Justus Introduces “DREAM Act”

JEFFERSON CITY - Senator Jolie Justus (D-Kansas City) today introduced legislation to make certain students eligible for in-state college tuition, regardless of their immigration status. The bill creates the “Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act,” otherwise known as the DREAM Act.

The legislation requires any higher education institution in Missouri that receives state funding to provide in-state tuition to students who meet the following guidelines:

- The student lived with his or her parent or guardian while attending high school in Missouri;
- The student graduated from high school in Missouri or received the equivalent of a high school diploma in Missouri;
- The student attended school in Missouri for two years and graduated from high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma;
- The student entered the United States before the DREAM Act was signed into law, and;
- An individual who is not a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident presents a signed affidavit to a higher education institution stating he or she will file an application to become a permanent resident at the earliest opportunity.

“Imagine the frustration and heartache of those students who work so hard to learn English and to excel in their studies only to find they cannot continue their education after high school because of the high cost of out-of-state tuition,” Sen. Justus said.

This is the second year Sen. Justus has filed the DREAM Act legislation.

“We are a nation of immigrants, all of whom came here to pursue the American dream,” Sen. Justus said. “Why would we make it more difficult for new immigrants to have the same opportunities that our grandparents or great-grandparents enjoyed when they came to this country? Are we now saying the American Dream is only for the chosen few?”

Sen. Justus says the DREAM Act is similar to bills filed by both Republican and Democratic senators in previous legislative sessions. Republican Senator Anita Yeckel filed SB 1367 in 2004, and Democratic Senator Maida Coleman filed SB 296 in 2005. Both bills would have made certain students eligible for in-state tuition, regardless of their immigration status.

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