How a Bill Becomes Law — page 3

Lobbying — page 5

• What is Lobbying?
• Schedule a Meeting
• Choose Your Roles

Lobby Tips and Other Materials page 7

• Things to Keep in Mind for Your Meeting
• Tips to Help You Guide the Conversation
• Sample Lobbying Script
• DREAM Act Talking Points
• DREAM Act Fact Sheet
• Petitions and Postcards
• Report Back Form
The United States Congress is the bicameral legislature - with a Senate and House of Representatives.

Each of the 435 members of the House of Representatives represents a district and serves a two-year term. Each state, regardless of population, has two senators, which makes for a total of one hundred senators.

FACT: About 25,000 bills are introduced in each term of Congress, but only 10 percent become law. These are the steps in the law-making process. A bill may begin in either the House or the Senate except for money bills, which must be introduced in the House.

1. Bill is Drafted: Members of Congress, the Executive Branch, and even outside groups can draft (write or draw up) bills.
2. Bill is Introduced - A bill can be introduced in either the Senate or the House, with the exception of bills that are related to money, which have to be introduced in the House first.
   - If Introduced in House: Representative introduces the bill in the House. Only members can introduce bills.
     - Sent to Committee: The Speaker of the House sends the bill to a committee.
     - Committee Action: Most bills die here. The committee may pigeonhole, table, amend, or vote on the bill. If bill passes, it goes to Rules Committee.
     - Rules Committee: It decides the rules for debate, and when the bill will come up for debate.
     - Floor Action: House debates the bill, and may add amendments. If a majority votes in favor of the bill, it goes to the Senate.
   - If Introduced in Senate: A Senator introduces the bill, which is sent to a committee.
     - Committee Action: Same procedure as in the House. If the committee majority votes for the bill, it goes to the whole Senate.
     - Bill Called Up: Majority floor leader decides when the whole Senate will consider the bill.
     - Floor Action: The Bill is debated, and amendments may be added. If a majority votes in favor of the bill, it is returned to the House.
     - Conference Committee: If the House rejects any of the changes, the bill goes to a conference committee of members from both houses. It works out a compromise.
3. Vote on Compromise: Both houses must approve changes made by the conference committee. If approved, the bill goes to the president.
4. Presidential Action: The president may sign (approve) the bill or veto (reject) it. If approved, it becomes law.
5. Vote to Override: If the president vetoes the bill, it can still become law if two thirds of both houses vote to override the veto.
Adapted from Junior Scholastic
What is lobbying and who can do it?

Lobbying is defined as an attempt to try to influence the thinking of legislators or other public officials for or against a specific issue or cause you care about. According to the United States Student Association Lobbying Manual: “It consists of a number of different forms, including meetings, writing letters, making phone calls, and other tactics. Lobbying is a way for students to share their personal stories and to advocate for a particular bill or issue on behalf of other students. Anyone can lobby! Most students believe that they need to have money or influence to lobby their elected officials. The only requirement necessary to lobby your member of Congress is to be knowledgeable about the issue.”

Legislators are normal people. They all have weaknesses, just like the rest of us. Always remember the legislator’s job is to represent you, therefore he/she should listen to what you have to say.
Schedule a Meeting

- Look up your Member of Congress office info.
  - Visit [http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm) to find your Senator.

- Try to schedule an appointment with the Member of Congress, or the immigration or education staffer. See the sample letter below. If you can’t schedule a meeting, then you can just show up at the door. Politely ask to speak with the Member of Congress or an available staffer. Ask to speak with the immigration staffer first.

Sample letter to request a meeting -

February 7, 2012
The Honorable Brad Sherman
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Attention - Scheduler

Dear ________,

I am writing to request a meeting with Representative Sherman. My name is __________. I’m a student at _____, and a member of __________ - a student organization that serves as a support and advocacy group for undocumented students at Cal State, Northridge. A group of constituents representing members of (insert organization name) would like to request a meeting anytime between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

We would like to meet with the Honorable Sherman in his Washington D.C. office to discuss his position on immigration reform, specifically the DREAM Act. This bill would create a pathway to citizenship for young people who came to this country at a young age but cannot contribute back to our society because of their lack of legal status. For far too long, undocumented youth have been left with few options and we believe the passage of this bill is long overdue.

We would like to meet with Representative Sherman to discuss this issue. Please feel free to contact me at XXXX@dreamactivist.org or (310) XXX-XXXX with any questions.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,
Choose Your Roles

Once you have your meeting scheduled, choose your roles in a very strategic way. We recommend no more than four people per meeting. Two will do too, but do NOT take twenty people to a meeting. You won’t all have a chance to speak and you won’t all fit in an office.

Roles:

• **Facilitator** – This person will not do all the talking but rather direct people and indicate who speaks, and when and what

• **Student to give testimony** – Choose someone who is directly affected by the issue and who can share his/her story with the member/staffer. Note: *We recommend that you choose someone with a very compelling story who can make others cry.*

• **Someone else to present information:** Present a packet of information to the member/staffer and briefly explain the content. You can include:
  - Letters of support from educators, businesses, other individuals or groups that can influence the Member of Congress.
  - DREAM Act Fact Sheet - See Page 12
  - Petitions - make sure you make a copy for your records.

• **Note Taker:** Someone to take notes during the meeting and who will be in charge of filling out the “Report-Back Form” - See page 13

TIPS and Other Materials

Review the following materials before your visit!

1. Things to peep in mind for your meeting - Page 8
2. List of tips to help guide the conversation - Page 9
3. Sample Lobbying Script - Page 10
4. DREAM Act talking Points - Page 11
5. DREAM Act fact sheet – Page 12
Things to keep in mind for your meeting

• **Be Gracious and Professional** – Begin by thanking the member/staffer for meeting with you.

• **Do your Homework and Be Focused** – Review the fact sheet and talking points (See Pages 11 and 12) on pages before your meeting. Make sure everyone in your team reads them.

• **Make It Personal** - If you are a constituent, make sure to let the member/staffer know that. Share your story. If this issue affects you personally or someone close to you, make sure you state that. Personal accounts make a very powerful impact on the members and staffers. Don’t be shy!

• **Consider Yourself an Information Source** - Don’t assume the member/staffer knows everything about this issue. Although you are proving them with a 1-pager/fact sheet, be sure to provide them with good and important information. If you don’t know something, don’t try to make up facts/information. Politely tell the member/staffer you will find out that information and get back to them. Make sure you follow up with the information they request.

• **Know Who Is on Your Side** - It is helpful for the member to know what other groups, individuals, institutions, or legislators are working with you. Providing this information illustrates that your group is not the only one interested in the issue. Mention that this visit is part of the National DREAM Act Week of Action hosted by DreamActivist.org.

• **Have a Specific Ask** - In this case you want to ask the member to co-sponsor the DREAM Act– make sure you say so directly and clearly! If the answer is not what you expected to hear, be ready to state why you disagree. Be polite but reiterate your support for this bill and why it is so important for the member to support it as well. Keep in mind that some members will not co-sponsor but will still vote yes when the time comes.

• **Wrap up the meeting** – End the meeting by thanking the member/staffer for taking the time to meet with you. Don’t forget to reiterate your support for the DREAM Act, and tell the member that you hope he/she will soon become a co-sponsor as well. Make sure to ask for a business card.

• **Follow up** - Send a thank you note immediately following a meeting. If the member promised to sign on as a co-sponsor, wait a few days and then check the Thomas.gov list of co-sponsors (http://1.usa.gov/dreamsenate and http://1.usa.gov/dreamhouserep) to find out if the member did what he/she promised. Send a letter in which you restate your position, thank her/him for co-sponsoring the bill.
**Tips to Help Guide the Conversation**

Members can have different positions on the issue. Here are some tips to help you guide the conversation.

**Member Strongly Agrees** -
- Thank the Member/ Staffer.
- Ask the Member to take a leadership role on the issue. Among the things you can ask the member to do are (don’t have to ask that same day but just keep in mind):
  - Write an opinion piece for a major newspaper.
  - Co-sponsor the bill, if not yet a co-sponsor.
  - Make speeches at public forums/ events.
  - Politely ask the member advice about talking to other members - whom to talk with and what arguments make the best case for the issue.
  - Ask what kind of information or constituency would be helpful in getting more members to support the bill.
  - Ask the member to “Lobby” undecided colleagues in the same committee or different committees. *- You might not know this information now but just keep this ask in mind for future meetings.*
  - Thank the member once again for meeting with you.

**Member is Undecided** –
- Thank the Member/ Staffer for meeting with you.
- Reiterate your support for the bill.
- Ask about the Member’s viewpoint on this issue. It will help you determine whether his/her position arises from personal or political factors, or whether is the lack of information, misinformation, or a combination of both. Adjust your strategy accordingly. Provide them with the information they need or make a note to follow up with them. Offer to find out more information and address his/her concerns.
- Ask if there are specific groups/ individuals/constituents the member would like to hear from.
- Thank the member once again for meeting with you.
- Follow up by providing information you promised you would get, if any.

**Member is Opposed** –
- Thank the member/staffer for meeting with you.
- Determine how strong his/her opposition is. If it’s based on a lack of information and not strong personal reasons, it might be worth to follow up and try to change the member’s position on the issue.
- If the member seems “movable”, then make sure you present information that addresses his/her concerns.
- Thank the member/ staffer once again for meeting with you.
Member is Strongly Opposed –

- Thank the member/staffer for meeting with you.
- If the member seems completely opposed to the bill and has strong personal reasons, then it might not be worth following up with him/her.
- Make a note of this on the report-back form and the Policy Team will re-strategize accordingly.

Sample Lobbying Script

Introduce Yourself: “Hi, my name is ____________, and I am a student at ____________, studying to become a ____________. I am also a member of ____________, a youth-led organization that advocates for the rights of immigrant youth. Also here (let others introduce themselves) We work with…”

State your positing and why you are there: We are in strong support of the DREAM Act, which will provide young undocumented people who came here as children to legalize their status by attending college or serving our country by enrolling in the military.

Give further details if necessary: (see fact sheet and talking points)

Student Testimony: THIS IS OUR STRENGTH!

Sample: My name is ____________. I was 8 years old when I moved to Los Angeles, California to reunite with my parents whom I had seen since I was 3 years old. I have lived in LA since and I am currently 23 years old. I became the first one in my family to graduate from college, and this summer I will graduate from Cal State University, Northridge with a degree in elementary education. I need the DREAM Act to pass so I can become a teacher in my community, which lacks bilingual teachers that can properly assist students and parents.

The ASK: The ask has to be clear and to the point. This is the reason you are meeting with your member of Congress, and what you will be reporting back. Make sure to record this on your Report Back Form (Page 15)

- Will the (Senator/Representative) co-sponsor the DREAM Act?
  - If NO: What are your concerns and how can we work with your office to address them?
  - If YES: Will you help us reach out to your colleagues to ask that they sign on as co-sponsors of the bill?
- Wrap-Up: Thank you for taking the time to meet with us, we will be sure to follow up on your questions.
DREAM Act Talking Points

IMMIGRANT YOUTH WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM THE DREAM ACT CAME TO THIS COUNTRY AT A VERY YOUNG AGE AND THE U.S. IS THEIR HOME. They contribute to every aspect of their community. Many volunteer at community organizations or at their churches, participate in school clubs and sports teams, and often work to help support their families yet they are not fully integrated into our society. They live in the shadows and in fear of deportation because of their immigration status. Some of these students have grown up in mixed status families, with U.S. citizen siblings and/or documented parents that have permanent roots in this country. All these students strive to continue to be with their families. Some have already petitioned for family-based immigration relief, but continue to wait in a badly backlogged immigration line.

CONGRESS CAN ACT NOW TO MAKE THE DREAMS OF AMERICAN YOUTH A REALITY. Soon to be introduced legislation would create a pathway to legalization for certain eligible immigrant youth. The DREAM Act is tailored legislation that has enjoyed growing bipartisan support in the House and Senate since it was first introduced in 2001. (See accompanying fact sheet for more information).

DREAM ACT IS ABOUT EQUAL OPPORTUNITY. As a society, we have a responsibility to provide all young people, regardless of immigration status, hope for the future and a chance at education. Undocumented students study and work just as hard as their U.S.-born classmates, but they do not have the same opportunities to pursue higher education. By allowing these students to pursue higher education, we are investing in the future of our country.

THE U.S. ECONOMY WILL BE STRENGTHENED WITH THE PASSAGE OF THE DREAM ACT. Several reports show that by providing access to higher education to these students, our communities, states, and nation would reap significant benefits, including reduced high school dropout rates and increased revenue from taxes paid by a more educated immigrant population.

A RAND study showed that a 30-year-old Mexican immigrant woman who graduates from college will pay $5,300 more in taxes and cost $3,900 less in government expenses each year than if she had dropped out of high school. This amounts to an annual fiscal benefit of over $9,000 every year, money that can be used to pay for the education of others.

The students who would benefit under the DREAM Act have been raised and educated in the U.S. They are the nation’s future innovators and entrepreneurs and will make up part of the educated workforce needed to help the U.S. compete in the global economy. In our globalized world, their multilingual and bicultural skills, and contributions are more important than ever to the success and global competitiveness of the United States. State and local taxpayers have already invested in the education of these children in elementary and secondary school and deserve to get a return on their investment.

WE SHOULD NOT PUNISH YOUNG PEOPLE FOR BEING PRODUCTS OF AN INHUMANE AND BROKEN IMMIGRATION SYSTEM. They arrived to the U.S. as children; they had no control over the conditions in their home countries that forced their parents to come here. The DREAM Act ensures that no child in America is denied their dream of having a better life if they're willing to work for it.

Immigrant youth have waited long enough. Pass the DREAM Act NOW!
DREAM Act Fact Sheet

The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act is bipartisan legislation that addresses the situation faced by young people who were brought to the United States years ago as undocumented immigrant children and who have since grown up here, stayed in school, and kept out of trouble. Support for the DREAM Act has grown each year since it was first introduced in 2001. For the first time, the DREAM Act also enjoys the strong backing of the House and Senate leadership, all of the relevant committee chairs, and President Obama.

Why is the DREAM Act needed?
Each year about 65,000 U.S.-raised students who would qualify for the DREAM Act’s benefits graduate from high school. These include honor roll students, star athletes, talented artists, homecoming queens, and aspiring teachers, doctors, and U.S. soldiers. They are young people who have lived in the U.S. for most of their lives and desire only to call this country their home. Even though they were brought to the U.S. years ago as children, they face unique barriers to higher education, are unable to work legally in the U.S., and often live in constant fear of detection by immigration authorities.

The DREAM Act will prepare the country for a new, global economy.
Today’s global economy depends on the creation, acquisition, distribution, and use of knowledge, and this requires an educated and skilled population. Passage of the DREAM Act would add thousands of talented, motivated, multilingual and multicultural people into our workforce.

Passage of the DREAM Act will increase tax revenues for cash-strapped federal, state, and local governments.
Newly legalized students would earn more and pay more in taxes. A RAND study showed that a 30-year-old Mexican immigrant woman who graduates from college will pay $5,300 more in taxes and cost $3,900 less in government expenses each year than if she had dropped out of high school. This amounts to an annual fiscal benefit of over $9,000 per person every year, money that can be used to pay for the education of others.

The DREAM Act is a stimulus policy. As President Obama said in his address to Congress, creating an educated workforce will stimulate our economy, increase productivity, and help the U.S. compete in the global economy. Students who would benefit from the DREAM Act are our future teachers, doctors, nurses, and lawyers. The DREAM Act will allow thousands of immigrant students to access higher education and maximize their contributions to our economy and communities.

The DREAM Act is a great return on money we have already invested.
The students who would benefit under the DREAM Act have been raised and educated in the U.S. State and local taxpayers have already invested in the education of these children in elementary and secondary school and deserve to get a return on their investment.

Legalized immigrant youth would contribute significantly to the Social Security system. The National Foundation for American Policy calculated that “over the next 50 years, new legal immigrants entering the United States will provide a net benefit of $407 billion in present value to America’s Social Security system.”

Adapted from the National Immigration Law Center Fact Sheet
Please return to admin@theniya.org so that we can compile all this information and share it with others.

Member of Congress visited/ Location:

__________________________________________

Date: ______________________________

Participants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>E-MAIL</th>
<th>PHONE #</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Who did you meet with? If he/she is a staffer, what is his or her role on staff? Provide contact information if possible.

________________________________________________________________________

2) How long did the visit last?

________________________________________________________________________

3) What was your specific ask?

________________________________________________________________________

4) What was the staff or member of Congress’s reaction? What questions did they ask?

________________________________________________________________________

5) What follow-up will you do after the visit? Let us know if you need help with this.

________________________________________________________________________

6) What’s your next step in working with this member of Congress?