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# Newsroom

## Margulies on 'DREAM Act' in TIME

Professor Peter Margulies talks to TIME Magazine about the DREAM Act: 'When politicians are scared, they don't always do what is best.'

Professor Margulies is quoted in [TIME Magazine](#), in an article titled, "Students Urge Senate to Pass the DREAM Act," by Andrew Clark.



**December 17, 2010:** When Renata Teodoro is

not studying for finals, she is placing calls to Massachusetts Senator Scott Brown. The other weekend, rather than traversing crowded malls and buying Christmas presents, the native Brazilian and other members of Boston's Student Immigrant Movement drove to Maine to rally in hopes of getting both of its Senators to support their cause. The students are among the thousands of "Dreamers" across the country whose goal is to do everything humanly possible to increase the chances of enacting the DREAM Act, which is short for the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act.

The legislation, which would provide a path to citizenship for some undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children, passed in the House of Representatives Dec. 8. The Senate is expected to vote on it Dec. 18, although it's unclear whether Democrats can get the 60 votes necessary to pass the legislation. (See video of a wannabe marine in support of the DREAM Act.)

"I'm very hopeful, though things may be difficult," said Teodoro, 23, an undocumented immigrant who has been in the U.S. since she was seven. Like many Dreamers, she has been willing to speak publicly — and risk detention or even deportation — in an effort to push through the bill. "We've worked so hard for this," says Teodoro, whose mother, sister and brother were deported in 2007. "No matter what happens, we are going to keep fighting."

So what exactly would passing the DREAM Act do? Despite the beliefs of many opponents, the legislation would not allow all immigrants to instantly acquire citizenship. Rather, the latest version of the DREAM Act, which was introduced on Nov. 30, would give conditional permanent resident status to undocumented immigrants who satisfy a number of stringent requirements. Among them: students must have entered the U.S. before the age of 16 and be under 30, be of "good moral character," and either be admitted to a college or have acquired a high school diploma or GED. (See the top 10 U.S. news stories of 2010.)

Under the DREAM Act, immigrants who obtain conditional status — which bars them from certain federal grants as well as from traveling abroad for lengthy durations — can apply for permanent status if they have completed two years in a bachelor's degree program or served in the military for two years. Additional requirements are also necessary for permanent resident status, including a display of good moral character.

According to the National Immigration Law Center (NILC), passage of the DREAM Act would benefit roughly 800,000 students currently living in the U.S. Attaining legal residency would mean these immigrants could apply for better jobs and get paid on the books. The NILC estimates that if half of the students affected by the bill in Texas attained legal residency and a bachelor's degree, the state would generate more than \$1.4 billion in additional tax revenue per year. (See photos of immigration detention in Arizona.)



Advocates for the legislation stress that passage of the bill would aid thousands who have been in the country since they were infants. Meanwhile, some of the bill's opponents have tried to portray the DREAM Act as a path to provide amnesty for criminals — even though the benefits of the bill do not apply to those with criminal records.

For **Peter Margulies, who teaches immigration law at Roger Williams University**, the languishing of the DREAM Act — which was first introduced in 2001 — has been a display of politics at its worst.

"You have politicians who think they can get votes by appearing tough on immigration," **he says**. "Then you have others who are afraid to do the right thing because they're afraid that someone may run an ad against them later on for voting for immigration. When politicians are scared, they don't always do what is best."

To read more, click [here](#).

[<http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2037799,00.html#ixzz18PkFBWXL>]