

Washington, DC – Today, Members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus issued the following statements after the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act was blocked from receiving an up-or-down vote by 41 members of the Senate:

US Rep. Mike Honda (CA-15), CAPAC chair: “Today’s Senate vote on the DREAM Act was devastating. The Senate had an opportunity to join the House of Representatives in passing a critical piece of immigration reform that would have enriched our nation’s economic competitiveness and military readiness, but they failed to do so. As chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, I stood side by side with the DREAMers and undocumented youth of this country and witnessed their resiliency. The vote has not changed the urgency of passing this legislation, instead it reminds us that we must continue to educate, mobilize, and empower our communities to ensure that DREAM Act students get a fair chance. I will keep fighting to bring this deserved opportunity to our DREAM students.”

US Senator Daniel K. Inouye (HI): “It is both unfortunate and ironic that on the same day a historic blow was struck for those opposed to discrimination of any kind, the Senate failed yet again to advance a measure that would have outlined a path to legal residency for immigrant children brought to this country by their parents. The DREAM Act has been around in some form for a decade, and Senator Durbin has bravely fought for it against long odds. But despite House approval, the Senate today was unable to agree that children under the age of 16 brought to this country by their parents should be granted legal residency if they remain in the country for five years and either attend college or serve in the military. There are an estimated 1.2 million children living in America who are eligible to participate in this program. The comprehensive immigration reform we claim we want in this country will not occur if we do not allow for the basic education of children and if we do not nurture the patriotic spirit of those brave enough to put on the uniform and fight for this country. I was once labeled an enemy Alien but we petitioned the government to allow us to fight and by the end of World War II the 442 Regimental Combat team suffered more casualties than any other outfit in the European campaign but became the most decorated unit of its size in the history of the United States military. By allowing the DREAM Act to sit idle, we extinguish hope for a lot of people and deny too many the opportunity I was given.”

US Senator Daniel K. Akaka (HI): “I am disappointed that some of my colleagues chose to block this legislation. The DREAM Act would have provided children who were brought to this nation by their parents with an opportunity to earn a path to the American dream by serving in the military or getting a college education. These young adults are not lawbreakers. Their undocumented status is no fault of their own. Yet a minority of my colleagues used a procedural rule to continue to punish them for their parents' decisions.”

###

The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) is comprised of Members of Congress of Asian and Pacific Islander descent and members who have a strong dedication to promoting the well-being of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Since 1994, CAPAC has been addressing the needs of the AAPI community in all areas of American life. For more information on CAPAC, please call (202) 225-2631 or visit <http://www.honda.house.gov/capac>.