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**CONGRESSMAN VICENTE GONZALEZ, TEXAS BUSINESS LEADERS, EDUCATORS,
REGIONAL OFFICIALS CALL FOR SENATE PASSAGE OF DREAM ACT
LEGISLATION**

UTRGV Roundtable highlights vital role Dreamers play in Texas economy

EDINBURG, Texas -- Today, during a roundtable discussion hosted by the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV), the [Texas Opportunity Coalition](#), and the Texas Business Immigration Coalition, Congressman Vicente Gonzalez (D-Texas), business leaders, local elected officials, and higher education administrators called on U.S. Senators for the swift passage of legislation that would provide a pathway towards legal status to an estimated [14,420](#) Dreamers in McAllen and [204,000](#) Dreamers in Texas.

Joining Gonzalez in today's discussion were Hidalgo County Judge **Richard Cortez**, McAllen Mayor-Elect **Javier Villalobos**, Edinburg Mayor **Richard Molina**; Texas businesses leaders **Eddie Aldrete**, Senior Vice President, IBC Bank; **Cynthia Sakulenzki**, CEO, Rio Grande Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; **Steve Ahlenius**, CEO, McAllen Chamber of Commerce; **Edna De Saro**, Senior Vice President and Marketing Director, Lone Star National Bank, **Sergio Contreras**, President & CEO, RGV Partnership; **Veronica Gonzales**, Board President, Edinburg Chamber of Commerce; and **Jorge Martinez**, Coalitions Director, The LIBRE Initiative; as well as representatives from UTRGV including University President **Dr. Guy Bailey** and graduate students and DACA recipients **Giovanni Escobedo** and **Jorge Contreras**.

"I am proud to join my colleagues in the House from both sides of the aisle to support the American Dream and Promise Act which would finally bring certainty to the lives of hundreds of thousands of Texas Dreamers who call our state home," said Rep. Gonzalez. "It is time for the Senate to put an end to the years of uncertainty and economic hardship that current immigration policy has on Dreamers, as well as Texas businesses, and pass Dream Act legislation into a federal congressional solution."

Earlier this week, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on H.R. 6, The American Dream and Promise Act. The bill, which passed in the House of Representatives in March with bipartisan support, would provide a pathway to lawful status for millions of Dreamers in the U.S. Texas Senators John Cornyn and Ted Cruz sit on the Senate Judiciary Committee, and will continue deliberations before voting whether to bring a Dream Act bill to the main chamber for full Senate approval.

"It is vital for Senators - particularly our Senators from Texas- to consider the economic benefits that passing a Dream Act would have in our state, especially while businesses begin to recover from the pandemic," said Aldrete. "Failing to act in providing a permanent solution for these Dreamers to stay and work in Texas would have enormous ramifications on our state's economy during a time when declining birth rates and a depleted workforce continue to impact business's access to human capital."

According to the [New American Economy](#), 96 percent of Dreamers in Texas are either employed or in school, and contribute more than \$39.8M in federal, state, and local taxes in McAllen and \$963 million in Texas. In addition, there are currently more than 58,000 Dreamers enrolled in Texas colleges and universities. However, without a congressional solution to their status, many of them will have barriers in entering the workforce, or starting their own business.

"UTRGV is proud to provide the opportunity for Dreamers in our country to seek postsecondary education, graduate with a degree, and contribute their talents to society as part of their journey to achieve the American dream," said Bailey. "Today's discussion provided a platform for Texas leaders to fully emerge in this complicated issue and unite in our support for Dreamers to remain living, working, and enriching our communities in Texas."

The roundtable is part of the Texas Opportunity Coalition's campaign to convene Texas business, higher education, and civic leaders to recognize the contributions of Dreamers in the state and advocate for passage of a federal congressional solution for Dreamers and businesses throughout the state.

To learn more about the Coalition's initiatives, visit www.txopportunity.org.

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About the Texas Opportunity Coalition:

The Texas Opportunity Coalition includes more than 100 representatives from statewide business associations, Texas corporations, local chambers of commerce, and Texas universities and colleges whose efforts are structured around five core principles that should inform any legislative effort to enact immigration reform. These principles can be viewed at <http://txopportunity.org/policy>.

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