

WASHINGTON—Young people who place their education at the forefront and who possess strong values that benefit their communities will be the ones who gain the most from passage of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, U.S. Rep. Ed Pastor, D-Ariz., said Thursday.

Pastor, whose district is home to many young undocumented people pushing for the DREAM Act's passage as a pathway to legalization, said he was heartened to see the legislation pass late Wednesday in the House of Representatives by a vote of 216-198. The bill will now go to the Senate for consideration.

"The DREAM Act would create a pathway to citizenship for undocumented young people who were brought to the United States as children, raised in this country, have excelled in our education systems and have expressed a clear commitment to pursue higher education or military service," Pastor said.

The DREAM Act, H.R. 5281, would grant U.S. citizenship to young illegal immigrants if they are attending college or serve in the military. It would assist thousands of young people who were brought to the United States as children by their parents and only know this country as their home.

Pastor has long advocated for the DREAM Act's passage and said he hoped the Senate will seize this opportunity to stand up for the principles of justice and opportunity on which America was founded. Since 2001, when the DREAM Act was first introduced in Congress, thousands of undocumented youth have been patiently waiting for its passage, hoping the law would let them come out of the shadows and pursue their academic and career ambitions, Pastor said.

"These young people were raised here and only know this country as their home," Pastor said. "They want to become part of our great society and give back to a nation they love so dearly and call their own."

