



TO: Education Committee
FROM: Tom Venzor, Executive Director
Nebraska Catholic Conference
DATE: January 26, 2026
RE: LB870/1061 (Repeal In-State Tuition for DACA/DREAMers) (Oppose)

The Nebraska Catholic Conference advocates for the public policy interests of the Catholic Church through engaging, educating, and empowering public officials, Catholic laity, and the general public. We oppose LB870 and LB1061's attempts to repeal in-state tuition for DACA/DREAMer migrants.

The Catholic Church has a long history of caring for the immigrant. This is because the Church is fundamentally impelled by the witness of Jesus Christ who, as we hear toward the end of the Gospel of St. Matthew, urged His believers to "welcome the stranger." At the beginning of that same Gospel, we read that Jesus Himself experienced the need to migrate and flee persecution. To use modern immigration law terms, we would say that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were like refugees and asylum seekers in their flight to Egypt as they escaped the wrath of Herod.

In addition to the life of Christ, the Church is impelled by the long-held experience, teachings, and practices of God's chosen people, the Israelites, who themselves experienced the plight of the migrant. Through this experience of being strangers in a strange land they learned about God's fidelity and love for them, as well as the moral obligation to meet the needs of the migrants they encountered.

These biblical and ethical principles have led the Catholic Church in Nebraska—and indeed throughout the world—to involve itself in the development of public policy and work toward justice for immigrants. When thinking about immigration policy, the Church is guided by and proposes for consideration three basic principles: first, people have the right to migrate to sustain their lives and the lives of their families; second, a country has the right to regulate its borders and to control immigration; third, a country must regulate its borders with justice and mercy.

In 2006, the Nebraska Legislature passed into law—overriding the veto of then-Governor Heineman—an important piece of legislation, LB239. This legislation ensured that certain migrants—now more commonly known as DACA recipients or DREAMers—had access to in-state tuition.

While DREAMers currently lack legal status and are undocumented, it is through no fault of their own. They were brought into the United States at a young age (even as early as infants), and have remained in our communities ever since then. While some have received [deferred action](#) from the federal government and have federal work authorization, DREAMers live in a vulnerable and difficult situation, not to mention a legally precarious one because Congress has failed to take critical action on immigration reform to offer DREAMers a pathway to citizenship.

Since 2006, LB239 has become a staple law for the state of Nebraska. It demonstrates our care and concern for long-standing members of our communities, some who have lived with us for several decades at this point and are in their early 40s. They are not just community members, but also community leaders. The in-state tuition policy passed by LB239 recognizes that DREAMers have been placed in a fundamentally unjust situation by the federal government, and that the state of Nebraska needs permissible state level action to help DREAMers live a more normalized life and be treated with equality under the law as they deserve.

We oppose LB870 and LB1061 because it would strip an important public policy from our state laws and take away from DREAMers, who have lived and studied alongside other Nebraskans, access to an affordable college education. DREAMers, as their name indicates, have dreams, like you and me. For many, achieving these dreams requires an advanced degree at the postsecondary level. In pursuing these dreams which are rooted in their experiences as Nebraskans, DREAMer should not be treated as non-residents and disadvantaged with out-of-state tuition, for a circumstance they had no control over. The treatment of DREAMers as non-residents of Nebraska disregards their years of life in Nebraska and, for many, their intention to stay in Nebraska for years to come.

It is unquestionable in our estimation that, at some point (hopefully sooner than later), Congress will regularize the legal status of DREAMers, given their unique circumstances and entry into the United States. Until that action occurs, it would be otherwise imprudent and unjust to create barriers to opportunity and stability for DREAMers, as LB870 and LB1061 would do.

We urge the Education Committee to indefinitely postpone LB870 and LB1061. Thank you for your time and consideration.