



Frequently Asked Questions

What is Question 4 on the Maryland ballot?

- Question 4 asks voters to vote for or against the Maryland DREAM Act. A vote *for* the law will uphold it.
- The Maryland DREAM Act allows undocumented immigrant kids, raised in Maryland, to pay in-state tuition at Maryland state colleges and universities.¹ The act was passed by the Maryland legislature in April 2011, but opponents have collected enough signatures to put it up to a popular vote in November.

Who is eligible for the DREAM Act?

- If a student has graduated from a Maryland high school, their family has paid taxes for three or more years in the state, and they attended community college for two years they are eligible for in-state tuition under the DREAM Act, regardless of their immigration status.
- These are students who were brought to the U.S. by their parents as children and have grown up knowing the US as their only home.

Why is the DREAM Act important?

- In-state tuition for Maryland state schools is \$8,909 per year compared to \$27,288 for out-of-state students.² This makes a huge difference for all Marylanders, and especially for DREAMers, most of whom grow up in working class families with limited incomes and no college savings. To make things even harder, DREAMers aren't eligible for federal loans and grants.
- Receiving a college education would let these students break out of the cycle of poverty and boost the economy by becoming a valuable part of the Maryland workforce.

How much would the DREAM Act cost the state of Maryland?

- DREAM-eligible students have paid taxes for at least three years and have been contributing to the tax pool designated for educating Maryland kids. It is estimated that it would cost \$778,000 in fiscal year 2014 to support the tuition rate DREAM students would receive.³ In 2010 alone, undocumented Marylanders paid \$275.2 million in state and local taxes, covering 354 times the estimated cost of educating DREAMers for a year.⁴
- Though the impact for DREAMers is life-changing, the number of students qualified to receive DREAM benefits is so small that the fiscal impact on the state is marginal. Moreover, any cost of educating DREAMers is an investment into an educated Maryland workforce.

Does the DREAM Act incentivize illegal immigration?

- The decision to emigrate from one's home is spurred by much harsher economic realities than the opportunity to pay in-state tuition.
- In the other twelve states that have passed state DREAM Acts, the numbers of students enrolled under the provision has consistently been less than 0.5% of the student population in state schools. This consistency suggests that the DREAM Act is not an incentive for moving to Maryland.

Will the DREAM Act take spots away from in-state applicants?

- No. DREAMers are counted as international students for the purposes of admission, and would not take away spots reserved for in-state applicants.

Have other states passed DREAM Acts?

- Yes! Twelve other states have passed state DREAM Acts since 2001, including California, Connecticut, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Rhode Island, and Washington.

¹ Full text of the law: <http://mlis.state.md.us/2011rs/bills/sb/sb0167e.pdf>

² University of Maryland. *Costs*. Retrieved Aug 1 2012, from <http://www.admissions.umd.edu/costs>

³ Department of Legislative Services. 2011 Session; Fiscal and Policy Note. http://mlis.state.md.us/2011rs/fnotes/bil_0007/sb0167.pdf

⁴ CASA de Maryland. *Facts on the Maryland Dream Act*. Retrieved Aug 1 2012, from <http://www.casademaryland.org/get-involved-mainmenu-102/maryland-dream/1894>

What is Question 6 on the Maryland ballot?

- Question 6 asks voters to vote for or against the Civil Marriage Protection Act. A vote *for* the law will uphold it.
- The Civil Marriage Protection Act brings equality to civil marriage in Maryland and extends the freedom to marry to gay and lesbian couples, ending discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The act was passed by the Maryland legislature in March 2012, but opponents have petitioned to place it as a referendum on the November 6th ballot.⁵

Why civil marriage? Aren't civil unions enough?

- The that law allows LGBTQ couples to be married under Maryland law also extends with it all the rights and privileges that are granted to married couples. Some of the rights currently withheld include:⁶
 - Ability to extend health insurance benefits to a spouse
 - Right to hospital visitation with and to make medical decisions for an incapacitated spouse
 - Added protection for children
 - Ability to inherit property without incurring tax penalties
 - Mutual responsibility for debts
 - Ability to name your spouse as primary beneficiary of life insurance without him/her incurring tax penalties
 - Right to make burial decisions
 - Right to sue for wrongful death
 - Right to file joint income taxes
 - Access to family courts for dissolution of relationships
- Gay and lesbian couples share the desire to stand before their family and friends to make a public, legal promise of lifelong commitment and responsibility. They want their children to live in a loving, stable, committed home and be protected under the law. Only marriage fulfills this dream.

Does civil marriage for same-sex couples affect churches or other religious institutions?

- Religious marriage will remain unchanged. Synagogues, Churches and other religious institutions are not required to perform marriages for anyone they do not want to.

How are these two issues connected to each other?

- **We, as Americans**, believe all people are guaranteed basic rights before the law. No one should be discriminated against based on their sexual orientation or heritage.
- **We, as Marylanders**, have a civic duty to vote for a fairer society. Both the Maryland DREAM Act and the Civil Marriage Protection Act will be on the ballot on November 6th.
- **We, as Jews**, value equality. The book of Numbers, among other texts and traditions, writes that we are to apply the same law to all people living in our communities. Both the Maryland DREAM Act and the Civil Marriage Protection Act work to give the same rights to all members of the Maryland community.

Why is JUFJ doing this work?

Both these issues speak to our responsibility as Jews to not only stand for what is right but to work actively for a more just society. Our community's history as immigrants and outsiders, and our commitment to full LGBTQ equality, demand that we act. Winning these two ballot measures will make a huge difference for our community and our neighbors – and today, we have a real chance to make change.

What can I do?

We will be working in congregations and Jewish communities to educate and build the strength we need to turn out voters and win in the fall. Every vote will matter in this election, and we must organize our friends, neighbors, and congregations to protect equal rights and opportunities for everyone in Maryland. **Vote YES on both the Civil Marriage Protection Act and the Maryland DREAM Act on November 6th!**

Visit www.jufj.org to learn more about how you can get involved!

⁵ Full text of the law: http://mlis.state.md.us/2012rs/chapters_noln/Ch_2_hb0438T.pdf

⁶ Equality Maryland. *Marriage Inequality in the State of Maryland*. February 2006. Retrieved Aug 1 2012, from http://www.equalitymaryland.org/uploads/4459/original/marriage_inequality_in_maryland.pdf