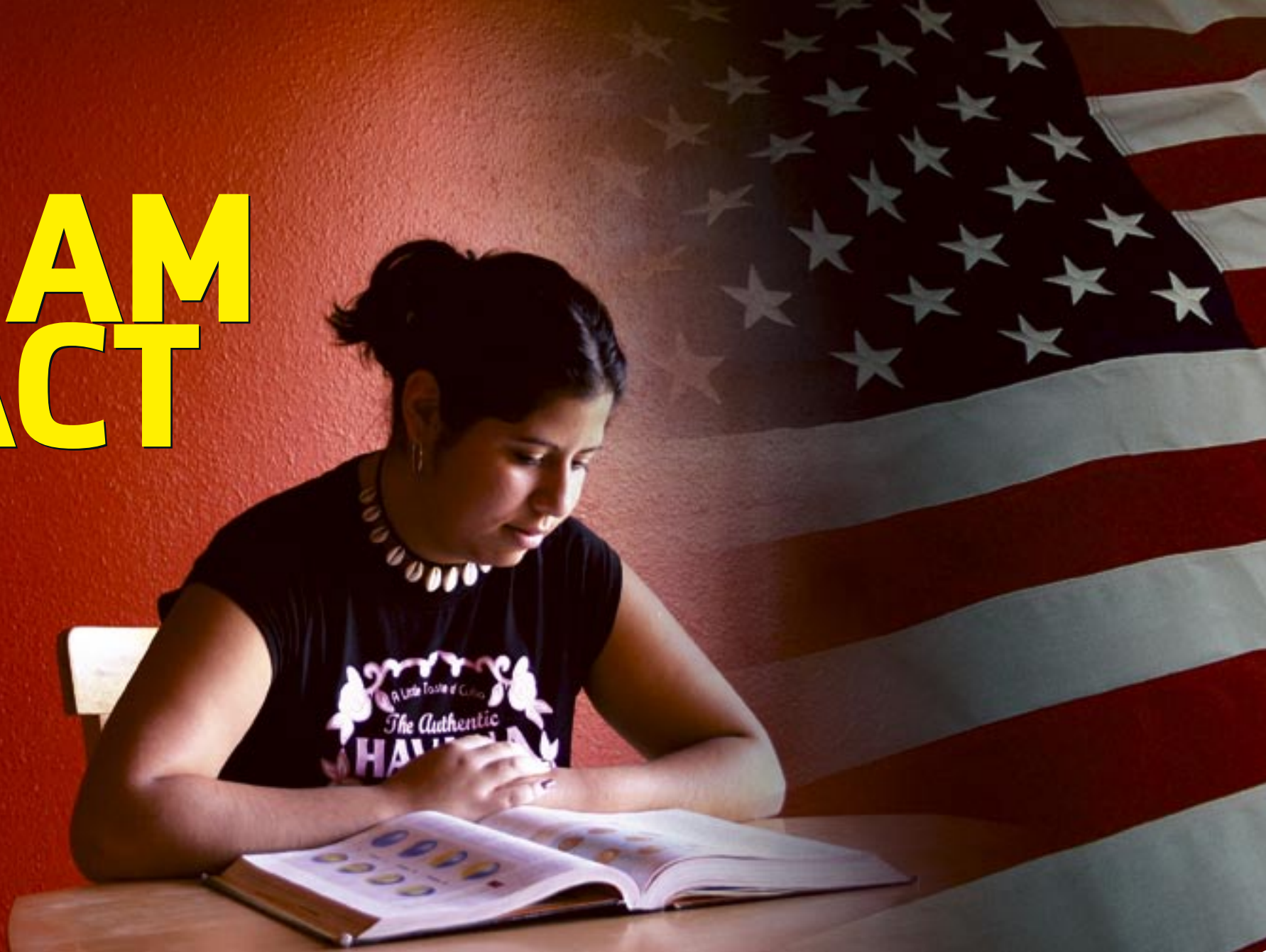


The DREAM ACT

Soon there may be hope for Maria and her family. The Dream Act may help Maria become a United States Citizen.



Maria is having problems at school.

She doesn't do well in her classes. The problem is not that she isn't smart but that she doesn't do the work that the teacher assigns. Her math teacher thinks that she is one of the smartest students in his class. He tells her that she needs to turn in her assignments so that she can pass her class and graduate high school. Maria doesn't care if she graduates high school. She is an illegal immigrant in the United States. If she graduates high school she will still not be able to get

a good job. Because she came to the United States illegally when she was young, when her parents were looking for a better life, she cannot work legally in the United States.

Maria's parents came to the United States from El Salvador. They came to the United States because they wanted their children to have a better life. They knew that they couldn't come legally. The wait was too long to get a residence visa and they didn't have enough money to pay for people to help them. They came to the United States anyway hoping to improve lives of their children.

Photo: Gloria Simon

Maria's brother works landscaping. He does difficult backbreaking work for less than minimum wage. He does all the hard work while his boss makes all the money. Maria's sister works cleaning hotel rooms. She is the best worker at the hotel but never gets a promotion or a raise in pay. They cannot get promotions because they are working illegally in the United States. Maria fears that she will also have to work cleaning hotels. They don't ask you for a high school diploma to clean hotel rooms. Maria's brother and sister have little hope for making more money because they were brought to the United States

illegally when they were children by their parents who wanted to give them a better life.

Soon there may be hope for Maria and her family. The Dream Act may help Maria become a United States citizen. The Dream Act is a bill created by Utah Senator Orrin Hatch. It stands for The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act. If approved, this bill will allow immigrants who came to the United States illegally as children to become US citizens. They will have to qualify for legal residence status by living in the United States for at least five years, having a high school diploma, and having no criminal record. The Dream Act gives hope to growing population of illegal immigrant youth in the United States to go to high school and get good grades so that they can go to college and work the job that they want to work.

The US Senate has not approved the Dream Act yet. It may take many more months to be decided on. There are many people who are against this bill because they say that it rewards people who immigrate illegally. There will still be much discussion about The Dream Act in the next few months. While it is being discussed many people like Maria will be waiting to see what their futures will look like. *SW?*

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Should the United States pass The Dream Act to help illegal immigrant youth? Why?
2. Does The Dream Act encourage illegal immigration to the United States? How?
3. How should the United States treat the problem of illegal immigration?