



Francisco P. Moya
Assemblyman 39th District

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

TESTIMONY FROM ASSEMBLY MEMBER FRANCISCO P. MOYA,
DISTRICT 39th

I am here today to submit testimony in support of New York City Council Resolution Number 1219 which calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation establishing the New York DREAM fund commission. The reason so many people from across the globe come to this country is simple: opportunity -- opportunity to grow, to learn and to succeed. That is what drew my parents here from Ecuador, and what continues to draw able and energetic people from near and far each year.

Yet, for the children of undocumented immigrants, opportunities in higher education are blocked by very real obstacles. By law, the basic financial resources that make college accessible for so many young people - federal student loans and grants -- are systematically denied to the children of many new immigrants due to lack of documentation by their parents. And with some 6.1 million Hispanic youth living in poverty in this county, according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center, denying these children resources for college denies them all the opportunities that a good education can provide.

While there are efforts underway to change the law to give the children of undocumented immigrants access to financial resources for college, most notably the proposed federal Dream Act, support for this new law and an end to the legal obstacle remains elusive.

That is why I have been working with a coalition of advocates to pass legislation which will create the New York State Dream Fund Commission (A.8689a). Modeled on similar funds in California and Illinois, New York's Dream Fund will create a state sanctioned non-profit commission that will collect private donations and turn that money into scholarship funding for the children of new and undocumented immigrants. Our legislation currently has 53 members signed on to sponsor this legislation in the Assembly and that number is still growing.

The Dream Fund will make the Dream of college education accessible to members of our society who are now denied access to all the opportunities a college education can provide. And it will do so without any costs to the state.



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Our legislation will also allow new immigrant families to create tuition savings accounts, if they choose, as another means to pay for college. Currently, a social security number is required to open such accounts, making it impossible for undocumented immigrants to do so. The bill will allow accounts to be created with just a tax ID number, enabling families to save their own money for the children's college education.

It is my hope, and my dream that the New York Dream Fund will allow the children of immigrants to reach their true potential and become the next generation's doctors, lawyers, teachers and scholars. If we can make that possible for them, it will benefit all of us. When that happens, the promise of opportunity that drew my parents here will be truly realized.

New York City Council Hearing on New York State DREAM legislation
public comment

Hi. My name is Russell Lum. I work in the NYS DREAM Coalition and particularly it's "Faith Committee." My friends in the faith committee understand that faith leaders and vowed religious and the people who work for or with them are in a position in this society to communicate the moral messages in policy advocacy from a faith perspective.

That's an easy story with New York State DREAM legislation. I work for the Little Sisters of the Assumption, a congregation of Catholic sisters who works with immigrant populations in New York (and in the Northeast more broadly), improving people's lives on personal and local levels. I do their policy and political and protest work, to be about improving people's lives on structural levels as well.

We think that this is a clear moral call, with multifaith agreement and momentum. We think that New York DREAM legislation is an equality issue, and that as many human legal structures as we can get People Power behind should be treating people as equals, since we are all equal in God's eyes. We are all children of God. To bear this truth out in our society would mean that the human legal structures that divide us along the lines of how we ended up in New York—presuming legitimacy for some of the ways of ending up in New York and doing some victimization on some of the other ways—would get rejected and rewritten.

God is infinitely bigger than our borders and our legal statuses. While that much is obvious to a lot of people, what it signals to me (which maybe is *not* being read as obvious) is that this is a call. A call to take a step in this direction. A call to be not *infinitely* bigger but *rather* bigger about borders and legal statuses.

A lack of response to the needs of undocumented youth—as would be attended to by the New York State DREAM legislation—would be a serious injustice. And the Sisters I work for have a God of justice. The Sisters I work for have a God who says, as in Leviticus¹, "When an alien resides with you in your land, do not mistreat such a one. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself."

Thank you.

—Russell Lum

Justice and Peace Representative,
Little Sisters of the Assumption

March 20, 2012

¹ 19: 33-34



CHINESE
PROGRESSIVE
ASSOCIATION

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March 20, 2012

Testimony of Mae Lee, Executive Director, Chinese Progressive Association
At New York City Council Hearing - Committee on Immigration, Committee on Higher Education

Re: Resolution calling upon the NY State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, the New York Dream Act, which would grant certain benefits to eligible undocumented immigrants.
Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation establishing the New York DREAM fund commission

My name is Mae Lee. I am the executive director of the Chinese Progressive Association. Located at the eastern end of Canal Street, we serve primarily those who live or work in Manhattan's Chinatown and Lower East Side. The majority of our constituents are low to moderate income families. The work we do includes teaching English to new immigrants, helping parents to navigate the public school system and become more involved in their child's education, building the leadership skills of young people.

We are here today to support the New York City Council to pass the two resolutions urging New York State to pass the New York State DREAM Act and NYS DREAM Fund.

Our organization supports this because education is a very important to our community. If you ask almost any immigrant parent why they came to the United States, they will likely say "so that my children can have a good education and better future".

We also believe that all immigrants, regardless of the circumstances under which they came here, deserve a chance at a better future. We have met young people in our community, who through no fault of their own or even of their family's are living here without legal status. Some have grown up in our community, have been educated here, are bright and talented, volunteer or work in the community, and will become our future leaders. There is no reason why they shouldn't go to college and beyond, and be given every opportunity to excel. We need them.

The first Chinese immigrants came to this country in the late 1800's during a period of very restrictive immigration laws, sometimes without the benefit of the "proper papers". Their stories have been told in published books and plays recounting their experience. Many of today's Chinese American community residents and leaders are the descendants of these immigrants who were also "dreamers" hoping for a better future. They managed to stay in this country, thrive, prosper, and contribute. We are here today because of them. Therefore, we urge the City Council to support our current generation of DREAMers by passing the two resolutions before you today.



DRUM- DESI RISING UP & MOVING

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New York City Council Hearing on the New York State DREAM Act Testimony by Ayesha Mahmooda March 20, 2012

Hi my name is Ayesha Mahmooda and I am the *Membership Organizer* at DRUM-Desi Rising Up and Moving. We are a grassroots community-based organization in Queens with a membership of 1,400 South Asian low-wage immigrant workers and students. Over 65,000 undocumented youth graduate from high school each year nationally. There are over one million undocumented immigrants in New York City. Of that Latinos (24%) and South Asians (22%) make up the two largest of the city's undocumented population. I am here today on behalf of our membership in support of the NYS DREAM Act which would provide financial educational resources for undocumented youth who have come to the U.S before the age of 18 and have been here for at least 2 years in the state.

For most undocumented immigrant families earning less than minimum wage in NYC, being able to provide their child a college education is not a reality. Many immigrant youth cannot enroll in college because they have to work low wage jobs and are facing rising college tuition prices, even in the CUNY system. Many other students can enroll in college, but struggle with staying in college and having to take time off or drop out to work. The NYS DREAM Act would help provide low-income immigrants with financial resources and means to attend colleges and private universities.

We further appreciate the NYS DREAM Act, because it would lessen the pressure for immigrant students to have to join the military under the currently proposed Federal DREAM

Act. It is unfair to force young people to be pushed into a decision to join the military because it is the only way they can get immigration status, especially for many poor youth who cannot afford college.

We also want to make sure that the NYS DREAM Act does not include a “good moral character” clause. Currently, the Assembly bill mentions the “good moral character” in the description of the bill, but not in the actual text, the way the Federal DREAM Act includes it. In NYC public schools youth are being criminalized day-day by zero tolerance policies towards discipline, increase in Student Safety Agents, metal detectors/scanners, and stop & frisk policies on the streets. We hope that these policies do not in effect end up excluding immigrant youth from being able to access higher education. Poor youth of color need to stop being disproportionately arrested and the NYS DREAM Act supporters should not further punish the most vulnerable youth.

We urge the New York City Council to pass the resolution supporting the NYS DREAM Act so that all youth can benefit and service this society. Help us win a real DREAM that will benefit all young people and our communities. Thank You.



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New York City Council Hearing on the DREAM Act

Testimony by Lionel Bravo

March 20, 2012

Hi my name is Lionel Bravo and I am the Youth Organizer and member of VAMOS Unidos (Street Vendors Mobilizing and Organizing in Solidarity). We are a grassroots community based organization of over 600 working class Latino and Latina street vendors in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens. We build the leadership of adult and youth street vendors across New York City. I am here on behalf of the Latinas and Latinos of the VAMOS UNIDOS youth group. We support the NYS DREAM Act but want to ensure that it does not include a “good moral character” clause. Currently the bill’s description mentions “good moral character” but not in the bill itself.

In our communities many our youth help to provide for their families financially by vending on the streets with their parents. We have gotten numerous reports from our base that high fine tickets, and summons which are considered misdemeanors are being given to our adult workers and youth. Not only does this occur on the street but also youth are being criminalized day-day in their schools by walking through metal detectors, being scanned, arrested and charged without reason. In today’s society the reality is that low-income youth of color are always targeted in their schools and communities.

We want to be sure that the NYS DREAM Act does not repeat the same mistake as the Federal DREAM Act, and that ends up excluding immigrant youth from access to education. With that in mind, I am here to urge NY City Council to support the NYS DREAM Act and provide access to financial educational resources for all immigrant youth.

City Council Essay by
Erika Wendoline Bret Miranda

My name is Erika Brett and I'm a graduate undocumented student.

Watching my grandmother crying was one of the hardest things I ever seen in my life. It was me at the bus station, saying good bye to her and the rest of my family, my next stop was my mom's house in New York. My name is Erika Bret known as Wendy, I'm from Mexico. When I turned 15 years old, my mom decided to bring me to the United States. At the beginning I was so happy because I had the opportunity to see her again after 5 years but I left behind many important people in my life; like my two little siblings. When I arrived to her house and I met my new family, I realized that that's was not what I really expected. I had to start everything, new school, new friends, including new siblings.

Being the older sister with 19 years old, makes me think that I'm the one who has to be the role model for all my siblings. I'm glad to be the older one and I know that I have to be more responsible about my actions and like any other girl of my age I make mistakes; that's why day after day I try to learn from my good decisions and even the bad ones. Today I'm proud of what I have accomplished, so far. I graduated from High School and I kept studying at LaGuardia Community College unfortunately this semester I couldn't attend, because I don't have enough money to pay for my tuition, but hopefully I can come back next semester. I made such good friends during my years in High School and I met people who made a big change in my life for example Latino Youth for Higher Education (LYHEP) a group of young people that help and support students like me to take the right path to get into college. Sonia Sendoya one of the founders of this program told me once "Life can be hard but not impossible" when I think about this, I remember the hard times that I had to deal about how to get into college being an undocumented student, but thanks to them and their support, my thoughts changed about my future. They helped me step by step how to apply and get into college and also after I graduated they accepted me as inter in their program.

My first semester in college were the toughest months of my life, all that I didn't wanted to do in High School like talk in front of people in English, I had to do it in my college classes in front of many strangers. During this period I learned to have more confidence about myself. Now that I had to take a break of college, I wanted to take my first step like a real adult and I start working to pay my studies. My mom used to pay for them but I felt bad because she has to work a lot for me and my other siblings without any help.

I know my mom is proud of me and I'm even more proud of her. I'm who I am now because of her. I really want to do the same for my brothers and sisters and let my mom to take a break. That's why the Dream Act is too important for me, I want to have more opportunities in my life, to show my siblings how to fight and achieve their goals and dreams. To show them how to do it, I have to achieve my goals first. I'm still learning how to become a leader. I want to be in front, I want to speak out and say "Hey look at me, even though I'm an undocumented student, I'm here fighting for my dreams and I know you can do the same, you just need to believe and work hard for a better future, your future."

Douglas Adams says once "I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I have ended up where I needed to be." Aunque me duele no poder regresar a Mexico y estar con el resto de mi familia, se que lo que estoy haciendo aca en un futuro valdra la pena, ya sea para cambiarle la vida a miles de personas o a mis cinco hermanos.

Gracias por su atención.

The Emerald Isle Immigration Center is a 501(c)(3) organization providing immigration, social services and employment related services to immigrants through its offices in Woodside, Queens, and Woodlawn in the Bronx. We assist more than 20,000 clients annually by providing case assistance, information and referrals. The EIIC offers legal counseling on immigration and naturalization matters to needy immigrants and New York City residents. The EIIC would like to thank the New York City Council Committees on Immigration and Higher Education for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding this legislation affecting immigrant students in New York. We also thank Chairperson Daniel Dromm, the Committee on Immigration and the New York City Council for their continued support of our work to assist the New York City immigrant community through the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI).

I. The EIIC supports the passage of the New York DREAM Act, S. 4179/A. 6829, in the New York State Legislature and urges the Governor to sign the New York DREAM Act, which would grant educational benefits to qualifying undocumented immigrant students.

There are currently 1.8 million undocumented immigrant youths living in the United States.¹ Sixty-five thousand are undocumented youths who graduate from high schools throughout the United States each year,² and 400,000 are immigrant youths living in New York that would benefit from the passage of the New York DREAM Act.³

The EIIC joined other immigrant groups and students this past week in Albany to push for passage of the New York Dream Act. One of these undocumented students, "M," is a dear friend of one of our staff member's children. M and her younger sister came to the United States from Mexico at the ages of one and two, respectively. Without the children's knowledge, the girls' mother asked an American couple to bring M and her younger sister across the border,

¹ N.Y.C. Council Res. 803 (2011).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

using the American couple's daughters' passports. Their mother who had crossed the border on foot met the girls on "other side"—on the U.S. side of the border. The American couple and the young girls parted ways, and M and her sister never heard from or saw them again.

Fast-forward to about seventeen years later. M tries to obtain her own New York driver's license. Imagine M's surprise when her mother informed her that she and her sister were not allowed to because they were undocumented. They were devastated. Not only was M unable to obtain a driver's license, but M and her sister would not also be able to qualify to receive any financial aid to pursue their dreams of receiving degrees.

However, M, her younger sister, and all other eligible undocumented students in New York would be able to qualify to apply for financial aid with the passage of the New York DREAM Act. On March 22, 2011, New York State Senator Bill Perkins and State Assemblyman Guillermo Linares introduced the New York DREAM Act which would allow undocumented youths, such as M and her younger sister, to obtain a driver's license, have an opportunity to work for the State of New York, and last but not least, provide them with access to financial aid from public and private sources to help them fund their pursuit of a higher education.⁴

More specifically, the DREAM Act allows all students—regardless of their immigration status access to the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and other scholarships.⁵ Allowing undocumented students to be eligible for TAP also has tremendous benefits for the economy. According to the Fiscal Policy Institute, the "median earned income for a New York State worker with a bachelor's degree is \$25,000 higher per year" than someone with just a high

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ David Dyssegaard Kallick, *The New York State DREAM Act: A Preliminary Estimate of Costs and Benefits*, Mar. 9, 2012

school diploma.⁶ The “additional taxes paid by the bachelor’s degree holders would amount to about \$3,900 per year to state and local governments, and a 2-year degree would entail an \$8,000 state investment in aid, [which means] a maximum TAP aid of \$4,000 at 2-year colleges.”⁷ The median income of a 2-year college graduate would amount to about “\$10,000 more per year, higher” than a worker with just a high school diploma. The state and local taxes paid each year would also be about \$1,000 higher.⁸ Thus, there is quite a huge return on investment for the State of New York. Further, if New York allows all of its students—both documented and undocumented more access to higher education, New York will also have an increase in highly educated workers, which means more productivity.⁹

Also, the DREAM Act is not a route to providing legal residency for undocumented youths.¹⁰ In fact, not all undocumented youths would be affected by the DREAM Act, since there are certain requirements for eligibility. The DREAM Act requires that an individual: (1) graduate from a New York high school with a high school diploma or its equivalent; (2) enter the United States undocumented before the age of 16; (3) be under the age of 35; (4) not have been convicted of a felony in any state or U.S. territory; (5) reside in New York for at least 2 years before the Act takes into effect; (6) enroll in a college or university in New York and complete at least two years toward a four-year degree within six years or serve two years in the New York National Guard or complete 910 hours of certified community service.¹¹

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ N.Y.C. Council Res. 803 (2011).

¹¹ *Id.*

Thus, EIIC urges the New York State Legislature to pass the DREAM Act and for Governor Cuomo to sign the Act making the pursuit of a higher education for all students possible, regardless of one's immigration status.

II. Emerald Isle Immigration Center (EIIC) supports the creation of a New York DREAM fund commission, A. 8689/S. 6071, to provide tuition assistance for all children of immigrants, both documented and undocumented, and urges the New York State Legislature to create the DREAM fund commission and for the Governor to sign legislation establishing the DREAM fund commission.

In order to help create the New York DREAM Act a reality, there must be funding to provide for the financial goals of the Act. Also, because the students of New York colleges and universities consist of both documented and undocumented students, the New York DREAM fund commission would not just benefit the "DREAMers" but also the documented students as well.

To make the pursuit of higher education possible to all the children of immigrants in New York, New York State Assemblyman Francisco Moya and New York State Senator Adriano Espaillat introduced the creation of the New York DREAM fund commission.¹² The commission would raise private funds in order to provide financial assistance to the children of immigrants to obtain degrees from higher education.¹³ The DREAM fund provides scholarships to individuals who meet the criteria created by the DREAM fund commission. Students who are eligible to receive the financial assistance from the DREAM fund would also have to apply to receive assistance from the DREAM fund commission.

For an individual to receive the benefits provided by the DREAM fund commission, an individual must: (1) have resided with his or her parents, or guardians while attending a New

¹² N.Y.C. Council Res. 1219 (2012).

¹³ *Id.*

York public or private high school; (2) graduate with a diploma or equivalent from a New York public or private high school; (3) attended a public or private high school in New York for at least three years before graduating high school or receiving the equivalent of a high school diploma; (4) and have at least one parent or guardian who immigrated to the United States.¹⁴

Because the DREAM fund commission does not require public funds to back it, there should be no reason for the New York State Legislature and the Governor to hinder its passage. EIIC urges the New York State Legislature to establish the DREAM fund commission and for Governor Cuomo to sign legislation that creates the DREAM fund commission.

¹⁴ *Id.*

FOR THE RECORD

Res. No. 0803– New York State Dream Act

Res. No. 1219 - New York Dream Fund

(March 20th, 2012)

The United Federation of Teachers supports Res. No. 803 and Res. No. 1219 calling for the passage of both the New York State DREAM Act and the New York DREAM Fund. We thank Council Members Ydani Rodriguez, Daniel Dromm and the other sponsors for their leadership on this important issue. As a union of educators we know first hand the importance of ensuring higher education access. With more than 300,000 undocumented students in kindergarten through twelfth grade in New York State's public schools the UFT strongly supports the passage of a national DREAM Act. The DREAM ACT would create for undocumented students a path to permanent residency and citizenship and a legal avenue for the completion of their education.

Unfortunately, the Republican majority in the U.S. House of Representatives have prevented the passage of federal DREAM legislation. In response to the obstruction of federal DREAM Act, New York State DREAM legislation – the New York DREAM Act (A.6829/ S.4179), introduced by Assemblyman Guillermo Linares and Senator Bill Perkins and the New York DREAM Fund Act (A.8689/S.6071), introduced by Assemblyman Francisco Moya and Senator Adriano Espaillat, has been developed in order to ensure that every New York student in our K through 12 school system has access to college and career opportunities.

The New York State DREAM Act would allow undocumented immigrants who enter the United States before the age of 18, are below the age of 35, reside in New York for at least two years, graduate with a high school diploma or its equivalent and have no felony convictions to be eligible for state and city-funded financial aid programs, which include grants, loans and scholarships available within the state of New York. The New York DREAM Fund would create a Commission to raise money to assist children of immigrants through scholarships to eligible individuals who pursue higher education.

The UFT has included both pieces of legislation on our list of New York State Legislative Priorities. By passing both the New York State DREAM Act and the New York DREAM Fund our state can make higher education accessible to thousands of New York residents and create pathways to economic security.

For more information please contact Jeremy A. Hoffman; Senior Legislative Representative at

212-510-6346.

Testimony of
Hector Figueroa, Secretary-Treasurer
SEIU 32BJ
NYC Council Public Hearing on Resolution #803
March 20, 2012

*For the
Records*

Good afternoon members of the New York City Council. I am Hector Figueroa, Secretary-Treasurer of 32BJ, the largest private sector union in the city. We have over 70,000 members in New York City alone, who as doormen, porters and supers, school and office cleaners, handypersons, and security officers are ultimately responsible for all aspects of building operations and play a vital role in maintaining the homes and workplaces of New Yorkers. 32BJ members come from 64 different countries, speak 28 different languages, and represent a microcosm of immigrants across the country. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in favor of the legislation before you today.

I am here to strongly support passage of Resolution #803, calling on New York State to enact legislation that would help provide equal access to higher education for all students in the state. New York is strengthened and enriched by the contributions of its diverse immigrant communities. The failure of the U.S. Congress to pass immigration reform that would provide a path to citizenship for the millions of men, women and children who live, work and study in this country without a valid immigration status is shameful. This failure to act requires states like New York to take steps to ensure that we do not squander the potential of an entire generation.

Though students in New York have the right to attend college regardless of their immigration status, too many are unable to benefit from that right due to prohibitive cost barriers. Undocumented youth often also experience conditions of poverty and simply cannot afford college tuition. By ensuring equal access to the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), educational savings accounts and private scholarship funds, New York State, can provide an important pathway to opportunity for thousands of students.

The ability to go to college means that young people who have grown up and gone to school in New York will be able to pursue their career aspirations and develop their minds. Moreover, a well-educated workforce is more productive and able to contribute to the economy and the tax base. The Fiscal Policy Institute has recently estimated that holders of four-year degrees earn, on average, \$25,000 a year more and contribute an additional \$3,900 annually in taxes. At this rate, any investment by the State in supporting higher education would pay for itself in just a few years, and then continue to generate additional returns for years to come.

Moreover, passage of state Dream legislation sends a powerful message to the rest of the country – and to the world – that New York embraces its immigrant residents and recognizes the value of the contributions they make. In a moment when the federal Congress is unable to act on immigration and in which states such as Arizona and Alabama have chosen to enact extreme anti-immigrant laws, New York can forge a progressive path toward real reform.

March 20, 2012

Written Testimony of Roxon Weir

Re:

Res. No. 803 - Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, the New York Dream Act, which would grant certain benefits to eligible undocumented immigrants.

Res. No. 1219 - Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation establishing the New York DREAM fund commission, which will advance the educational opportunities of children of immigrants through scholarship programs for higher education.

Hi, Good Afternoon city council members, thank you for listening to my testimony on the behalf of the New York State Youth leadership Council. The New York State Youth Leadership council is the organization which first approached Senator Perkins and Assemblyman Linaers with the New York Dream Act, a bill that would allow undocumented Students who want to achieve Higher Education access to the Tuition Assistance Program. (TAP)

My life in America began the summer before I turned 12 years old when I flew into JFK international from the island of Jamaica. In Jamaica I always heard tales of New York City as the one that never sleeps, how being in America could change your life, how you could see all your dreams come true with hard work and education here in the United States. My Grandmother and Aunt though it best to bring me and my sister to America because we had no family left there with whom we could stay. Neither a grandmother or an Aunt can file for a granddaughter or a niece so they brought us to the USA by the means they thought was best at the time. Our mother had come to America in 1986 when I was only 3 years old, my sister 3 months old and for all intents and purposes had abandoned us, never sending any money to care for us or send us to school. She instead started a new life Brooklyn having two more little girls to replace the ones she left in Jamaica.

In middle school I was always on the honor roll and I received a good number of awards including Student Achiever of the Year in 8th grade after spending only 2 years in that school. I remember in those days I dreamt of becoming a Doctor, helping my patients get well again and at the same time making my Grandma and Aunt proud of me; helping to care for them in the same way they had cared for me when I had no one else.

I began living with my mother my sophomore year while attending Washington Irving High School. My life changed dramatically as I became the eldest of four children and my mother's right hand and she would call it. She would work as a nanny forty hours a week so I had to take on all her duties at home. When I came home from high school I had to cook dinner every night, check my siblings homework, do all the household chores and then finish my own homework. Still I managed to do a good job in school even getting accepted into the International Baccalaureate Program after the director noticed how astute I was in history when I got a 98 on my Global History Regents. It was the first year the program was implemented in a Public high school and we were the first class who were able (some of us) to graduate with college credits. I took three college level classes in my Junior and Senior year in History, English and Art managing to get college level credits in English and history by passing a couple of grueling test.

I did the best I could do in high school even though my home life was not the greatest, I could not let

that stop me. In my Junior year I became a member of ARISTA, I graduated with an 85% average and received a 1300 hundred score on my SA T's.

The first time I realized that my undocumented status was going to make it difficult for me to educate myself further was when I started getting letters of decline from the colleges I had applied to because they had limited or no space for "international students" the status I fell under. 4 out of 5 colleges sent me letters of denial but Howard University sent me their letter of acceptance and once again I was elated. Only to feel defeated once again when the topic of finance came up and I realized I would not be able to get any form of financial aid. Scholarships for undocumented are very few and nearly impossible to attain. Even with all of my achievements I was still not equal to my classmates, who were all receiving financial aid and well on their way to the college of their dreams.

New York State had not yet passed the Instate Tuition Bill that allows undocumented student to pay in-state tuition (that happened in 2002) so that was not an option I had at the time of my graduation in 2001

My mother gave me her support and paid for my first semester at Howard University. Before my second term could begin, she was pregnant again with her fifth child, my brother. I went back to Howard for a second semester with the promise that she would continue to provide support for me, only to find out at the end of the semester that she never paid my tuition and boarding fees and so I owed the school a sum that totaled nearly \$8000.

When I heard about the in-state tuition for the undocumented in New York State I felt hopeful again, but Howard University would not release my transcripts until I paid them all monies due. I spent the next four years babysitting in my effort to pay Howard with no help from my mother who was now focusing all her money on raising yet another child with no father around to help.

After Howard University I next attended Hunter College here in the City where I was able to pay for one math class, college algebra, I had been out of college for about five years by then, and it felt like I was completely starting over, still I managed to get a B in that class.

I am now on my own with my own family, a son Jonah who celebrated his 3rd birthday yesterday, a son who I love dearly who grows on my heart more and more everyday. When a woman finds out she is pregnant she is usually filled with joy. Instead I felt trepidations knowing the life I could condemn my child to by not having the necessary documents it would take to help me finish school, obtain a good job and be able to provide my baby with the kind of support he deserves. We struggle daily to survive, we have to pay rent which is impossibly high making it hard to put enough food on the table. There are times when our electricity has been turned off, there are times when we are not able to pay the whole rent, so we live with the fear of eviction, it is a constant threat. There are times when I cannot afford to buy Jonah a new pair of sneakers after he has outgrown the last pair.

If the Dream Act were to pass in New York State then I could spend less time at work and more time in the classroom. It has taken me 10 years to accumulate 30 credits, something normal students are able to do in one year. Access to the tuition assistance program would guarantee that it will not take me another 10 years to accumulate another 30 credits. Access to TAP would help me to keep my dreams of earning a college degree alive. I work hard for my family and I will continue to do so, I know that there is a better way, I know that I can achieve more with a degree in hand than I will ever

working for 50 hrs a week as a nanny. I am undocumented through no fault of my own, I am undocumented but I strongly believe no piece of paper should stand between a person and their education. In eastern Brooklyn many of my peers are not even interested in earning a high school diploma much less a college degree, but that has not stopped me from dreaming of graduating from college.

What has thwarted me time and again in my efforts to attain my college education is the money, my inability to get financial aid, a scholarship or even a loan. To some \$2500 is a mere inconvenience, a small dent in their wallet, for me the sum might as well be \$1 million. I simple cannot afford to support my family and go to college at the same time. With the passage of the New York State Dream Act, my life and the life of others like myself in East New York would change for the better, we could infuse our community with education, become stalwart examples of what achieving the American dream is all about. I could volunteer, help those in my community bridge the gap and become educated productive citizens. Jonah has helped to inspire me to become a teacher, an educator who understands that we are only as strong as our weakest link. New York State can be stronger if more of the residents achieve higher education and teach their children to do the same.

I urge you members of the city council to encourage the Governor to include the New York Dream Act in his executive budget, I strongly believe it will be a small sum to pay for a lifetime of further productivity and achievement in this fair state.

S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

4179--B
2011-2012 Regular Sessions
I N S E N A T E
March 22, 2011

Introduced by Sens. PERKINS, ADAMS, BRESLIN, DIAZ, DILAN, DUANE, ESPAILLAT, HASSELL-THOMPSON, HUNTLEY, KRUEGER, MONTGOMERY, OPPENHEIMER, PARKER, PERALTA, SERRANO, SQUADRON -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Finance -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to establishing the New York dream act providing certain benefits to undocumented immigrants that satisfy certain criteria

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
2 the "New York dream act".

3 S 2. The executive law is amended by adding a new section 101 to read
4 as follows:

5 S 101. NEW YORK DREAM ACT. 1. THERE IS HEREBY ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE
6 DEPARTMENT, A DREAM ACT, WHEREBY UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS WHO SATISFY THE
7 REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH IN SUBDIVISION THREE OF THIS SECTION SHALL QUALIFY
8 FOR THE BENEFITS SET FORTH IN SUBDIVISION FOUR OF THIS SECTION.

9 2. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, THE TERM:

10 A. "ELIGIBLE PERSON" SHALL MEAN ANY INDIVIDUAL THAT MEETS THE CRITERIA
11 SET FORTH IN SUBDIVISION THREE OF THIS SECTION.

12 B. "UNDOCUMENTED" SHALL MEAN A NON-NATURALIZED IMMIGRANT.

13 3. TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS UNDER SUBDIVISION FOUR OF THIS SECTION,
14 AN INDIVIDUAL SHALL:

15 A. HAVE GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL WITH A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR ITS
16 EQUIVALENT, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO A GED;

17 B. HAVE ENTERED THE UNITED STATES BEFORE THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN;

18 C. BE UNDER THE AGE OF THIRTY-FIVE;

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[] is old law to be omitted.

LBD10420-09-1

S. 4179--B

2

1 D. NOT HAVE BEEN CONVICTED IN THIS STATE OR ANY OTHER STATE OR TERRI-
2 TORY OF A VIOLENT FELONY; AND

3 E. HAVE RESIDED IN NEW YORK STATE FOR AT LEAST TWO YEARS BEFORE THE
4 EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS SECTION.

5 4. ANY ELIGIBLE PERSON SHALL HAVE ACCESS TO STATE-, CITY-, TOWN-
6 AND/OR VILLAGE-FUNDED FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED
7 TO GRANTS, LOANS AND SCHOLARSHIPS.

8 5. THE SECRETARY SHALL PROMULGATE RULES AND REGULATIONS TO EFFECT THE
9 PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION AND TO FURTHER DEFINE THE REQUIREMENTS AND
10 BENEFITS OF THIS SECTION.

11 S 3. This act shall take effect on the one hundred twentieth day after
12 it shall have become a law; provided, however, that effective immediate-
13 ly, the addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation
14 necessary for the implementation of this act on its effective date are
15 authorized and directed to be made and completed on or before such
16 effective date.



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

SCOTT M. STRINGER
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

**TESTIMONY OF MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT
SCOTT M. STRINGER**

**BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION AND
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Hearing on New York State "DREAM Act" and "DREAM Fund" Resolution Introduced in
the City Council**

Tuesday, March 20, 2012

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I commend the Chairpersons, Council Members Dromm and Rodriguez, for holding this hearing on the New York "DREAM Act" and New York "DREAM Fund" proposals. I also commend Senator Perkins, Assembly Member Linares, and Assembly Member Moya for introducing legislation that further supports immigrant youth in New York.

As the President of the Borough of Manhattan, I proudly represent the historical entryway for generations of immigrants in the U.S. and over a half million immigrants who constitute 30 percent of our borough's residents. Our city and country continue to flourish because of the positive contributions of immigrants to our economic, cultural, social and civic life.

It has been a priority of my office to ensure the full and equal participation of immigrant communities in our city and in 2006 I convened the Manhattan Borough President's Immigrant Rights Task Force. Through this initiative, we identified that there was a lack of resources and support for our immigrant communities to enable them to access services and benefits and enforce their legal rights. In response, last year my office launched the Manhattan Borough President's Immigrant Rights and Services Manual, a unique and comprehensive tool that explains legal rights, public benefits eligibility and public programs and services in a wide range of areas in a straightforward and comprehensible format. The manual is now available in Spanish and Chinese with the Korean and Russian versions to be released soon.

The problems we see immigrants face in our City are only a microcosm of the greater story of a broken national immigration system. Each year, approximately 75,000 hard-working immigrant students graduate from high school across the country, but too many of them are unable to access post-secondary education, obtain federal financial assistance or secure work because of their status.

In 2007, my office launched the Civic Leaders of Tomorrow Fellowship to promote the goals of the Federal DREAM Act by providing a new source of support for immigrant youth in higher education and placing students in internships with immigrant rights organizations.

In order to move our city and country forward in a global society, we must provide youth like the Civic Leaders Fellows the chance to realize their full potential as Americans so that they may lead productive lives as contributing members of our nation.

We urge the City Council to pass the resolution in support of New York State DREAM legislation that would provide opportunity and fairness to thousands of immigrant youth in our city by increasing access to financial aid and the ability to succeed for the children of immigrants.

Passage of the New York DREAM Act and DREAM Fund legislation would benefit many thousands of students in New York City alone, including at least an estimated 10,000 City University of New York (CUNY) students. For qualifying, hard-working immigrant youth, this legislation would provide aid for higher education. Passing New York DREAM legislation is a step towards bringing these young people fully into the formal economy which will in turn grow our skilled workforce and increase tax revenues. It will also deter them from the risk of dropping out of school or engaging in criminal activity. In many cases, these immigrant youth know of no other country but the U.S. as their home. They have invested the same hard work and faith in our society as other Americans and we must provide them with the chance to further their lives.

The New York DREAM Act and DREAM Fund legislation is an important step towards finding a serious solution to our immigration system and integrating our society, restoring legitimacy to our laws, and treating immigrants with dignity. We must make the most of this critical opportunity and pass the New York DREAM Act and DREAM Fund legislation as we continue to pursue comprehensive immigration reform.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



ASIAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND

99 HUDSON STREET, 12th FL, NEW YORK, NY 10013-2815 212.966.5932 FAX 212.966.4303

March 20, 2012

My name is Bethany Li and I am an attorney at the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF). Founded in 1974, AALDEF is a national civil rights organization that protects and promotes the civil rights of Asian Americans. AALDEF focuses on many issues affecting Asian Americans, including immigrant rights, civic participation and voting rights, economic justice for workers, language access, Census policy, affirmative action, youth rights and educational equity, housing and environmental justice, and the elimination of anti-Asian violence, police misconduct, and human trafficking. AALDEF supports the New York DREAM legislation and encourages the New York City Council to adopt these two resolutions calling on the New York State legislature to pass the New York DREAM Act and the New York DREAM Fund Commission.

AALDEF believes that federal immigration policy must adhere to basic human rights principles that reflect the realities of the nation and its residents, especially the millions of undocumented people who form the economic backbone of this country. As evident in our work, the needs of immigrants in the United States impact many policy areas and affect all aspects of family life -- from economic justice for workers to affordable housing for families to education equity for students.

At our immigration clinics, undocumented students routinely approach us with questions not just about immigration issues but also about how to access higher education. We have recently begun working with Asian American students from New York and New Jersey who are launching a youth group and safe space for Asian American DREAMers. They tell us that Asian undocumented youth are often burdened by the model minority myth and therefore overlooked. Because they have been unable to legalize their status, one of the biggest issues that all of these students tell us about is their struggle to pay for college.

Many undocumented students in our communities came as children. Some were not even aware of their undocumented status until they began applying to college. Others grew up worrying about how they would pay for college because despite being able to get in, they cannot access financial aid and their families are unable to afford the tuition.

Our federal immigration policies have failed to meet the needs of these students and their families. New York DREAM legislation is critical in helping to fill this unmet need for the thousands of students who are seeking financial aid for higher education.

New York is already one of twelve states that allow undocumented students to qualify for in-state tuition for public colleges. Despite this important step, undocumented students continue to struggle to pay for college because they do not have equal opportunities to access financial aid. New York DREAM legislation will ensure all students in this state equal access to aid for higher education regardless of their immigration status.

Undocumented youth represent an abundance of potential for our country and their families. In the absence of federal solutions to fix our broken immigration system, New York DREAM legislation helps to address the many needs of thousands of undocumented students in this state and their families.

Bethany Y. Li
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Jessica Orozco
Director of Immigration and Civic Engagement
Hispanic Federation

Testimony on Resolutions 803 and 1219

March 20, 2012

Good Afternoon. My name is Jessica Orozco and I am the Director of Immigration and Civic Engagement speaking on behalf of the Hispanic Federation. I would like to thank the NYC Council's Committee on Immigration and Committee on Higher Education for bringing us together today and affording our community of immigrant and Latino advocates the opportunity to express our need for the DREAM Act and DREAM Fund.

I would like to start off by stating that the Hispanic Federation (HF) unequivocally supports the proposed DREAM bills and, as a leader in the Latino community, calls on the NYS legislature to pass the DREAM Act and DREAM Fund to ensure that DREAM students have fair and equal access to higher education.

As you may know, the Hispanic Federation is one of the leading Latino organizations in the nation and is dedicated to promoting the social, political and economic well-being of the Hispanic community. For more than ten years now, the Federation has been working on advocating for the passage of humane and fair immigration reform in our nation's capital. Regrettably Congress has continually failed to fix our broken immigration system and pass common sense reform. The lack of leadership in Washington has pushed states to fill the void and answer this fundamental question: how do we view and treat immigrants in our society? Several states like Arizona and Alabama have chosen to pass laws that punish and marginalize undocumented immigrants at any and all cost. In these states the goal has been to advance racial segregation, family disintegration, and remove as many immigrants from local communities as possible.

New York - a beacon of hope and opportunity for generations of immigrants - must show the nation a different way. Indeed, the Empire State must forge a path that honors its history and the contributions immigrants have made to its economy, culture and quality of life. Where others choose intolerance, we can choose to stand for integration, education and opportunity. The proposed DREAM bills offer Governor Cuomo the chance to not only stand up for immigrant rights, but to demonstrate this populations' value to the rest of New York's economic, cultural, and social wellbeing.

The DREAM Act introduced by Assemblyman Guillermo Linares and Senator Bill Perkins, and the DREAM Fund introduced by Assemblyman Francisco Moya, offer a wonderful opportunity for the New York State legislature to affirm our road forward and make a significant difference

in the lives of thousands of young people. These complimentary bills would generate private scholarship funds for undocumented youth, allow families to establish tuition accounts by using taxpayer and employment identification numbers in lieu of social security numbers and give undocumented youth access to NY state and city financial aid programs, including grants, loans and scholarships.

New York's undocumented immigrants represent a wealth of untapped potential and talent that, under current policy, threatens to be wasted. Most notably, our undocumented youth – seeking an education that would allow them to become the state's next leading doctors, lawyers, and community leaders – are not only deserving of our support, but eager to prove and contribute their value to the state they call home:

Most of these children were brought to the United States as young children, and as such, were educated in our public schools, developed ties to their local communities, and above all – consider themselves American. To deny this already vulnerable population the equal access to education would be to contradict our values and stymie economic development.

Looking to better not just the lives of immigrants, but our community as a whole, we can demonstrate to the rest of our nation that the success of future generations – comprised of both immigrants and native New Yorkers alike – is a valuable resource worth our financial investment and moral support.

The students that would benefit from these bills have been trained to strive towards the goal of higher education by our culture, public school system, and the American dream, but many find themselves unable to simply because of the high cost. If passed, the DREAM bills would help lift barriers to college for thousands of undocumented students. By expanding NYS' Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) to all students who qualify for aid regardless of their immigration status, the state would be investing in its undocumented youth at a relatively low cost with a strong return on investment; in other words, a lifetime's worth of social, cultural, political, and economic contributions that can be cultivated and celebrated, rather than hidden out of fear.

Study after study has affirmed that per capita income and college attainment rates are closely correlated. A worker in New York holding a bachelor's degree earns an average of \$25,000 more per year than their counterparts who only have a high school diploma and therefore contribute an additional \$3,900 each year in taxes to local and federal governments. It is clear that by investing in our youth, New York can continue to position itself as one of the largest economies in the world while reaping the benefits of increased economic productivity and increased tax revenues.

Let's give DREAMERS the opportunity that other generations of immigrants have been granted: to work hard, achieve and fully contribute to our society. In doing so, we will be answering affirmatively how we view immigrants as integral to New York's future success.



AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
NEW YORK CHAPTER
2011-2012

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March 19, 2012

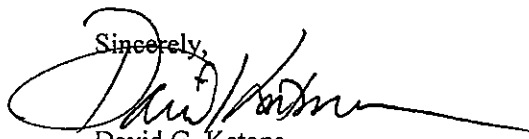
Committee on Immigration/Committee on Higher Education
250 Broadway, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: Res. Nos. 803 and 1219

Dear Committee Members:

The New York Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association submits the following testimony in support of the New York State DREAM Act.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David G. Katona
Chair

Michael Mandel
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March 20, 2012

New York City Council
Committee on Immigration
Committee on Education

Re: **NY STATE DREAM ACT**

My name is Michael Mandel, and I am an immigration lawyer and co-chair of the Advocacy Committee of the New York Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, the nation's largest professional organization of immigration lawyers.

Based on my professional experiences over the past 10 years, I am well aware that there are many difficult, controversial issues when it comes to immigration. Yet what to do about undocumented young people should not be one of them. The fact that Congress has not passed the federal DREAM Act is disgraceful, unacceptable and probably the single best example of Congressional dysfunction when it comes to immigration. DREAMers – young people brought to the US at an early age who have lived the bulk of their lives here, gone to school, contributed to their communities and are Americans in every way except for where they were born – deserve nothing less than respect, admiration and an express lane to citizenship.

Unfortunately, the state of NY cannot grant legal immigration status to DREAMers. I wish we could. But short of that, making college more accessible through passage of the NY State DREAM Act is an alternative worthy of support.

The NY DREAM Act will give DREAMers access to government financial aid, not green cards. This is simply about establishing educational equality in terms of access to financial aid for higher education – leveling the playing field regardless of someone's immigration status or where they were born.

AILA-NY supports the NY DREAM Act for several reasons:

First, it was imagined by undocumented young people themselves – specifically the brave and outrageously talented leaders of the NY State Youth Leadership Council. I have had the privilege of working with some of them through their Education Not Deportation program – where they fight to prevent DREAMers from being deported. Their tenacity, creativity, compassion and sense of justice is awe inspiring. Every day, they exhibit the courage and moral leadership so lacking in DC and elsewhere, succeeding in spite of overwhelming odds and in the face of a heartless and cruel system. They are tomorrow's lawyers, teachers, scientists and doctors – but not without a college degree.

Second, leveling the educational playing field by passing the NY DREAM Act is a moral issue. After all, why should undocumented young people be treated differently than their US citizen peers, when they really are the same in every way except for where they were born? And while having the right to pay in-state tuition to attend college is a good start, it is clearly not enough, considering the vast number of DREAMers in NY still unable to afford higher education. And while any legislation that makes attending college more affordable is worthy of consideration, we feel strongly that **DREAMers should be eligible for full access to financial aid through NY's Tuition Assistance Program.**

For those people unmoved by moral arguments, it is important to note that there are very practical reasons for supporting the NY DREAM Act. Everyone benefits from a highly educated workforce. DREAMers are also drawn to professions with severe shortages of workers, like nursing. Let them go to college, so that once the federal DREAM Act passes and they can work legally, they'll be ready to jump in. And DREAMers possess the discipline, determination and creativity needed to become successful small business owners, the backbone of the economy.

I have heard the arguments in opposition to the NY DREAM Act, yet they do not hold up to scrutiny. Some people are concerned that it will cost too much, yet a recent study by the Fiscal Policy Institute showed that adding DREAMers to the state's Tuition Assistance Program would increase the cost by only 2%, an insignificant amount when considering the return on investment that is guaranteed to follow. Others express concern about rewarding what they call bad behavior. But this ignores the fact that DREAMers were brought here by their families at a young age, have played by the rules, gone to school and already contributed to their communities in countless ways.

Some people are opposed to the NY DREAM Act because they are afraid it will take away opportunities for themselves or their children. But in a country that pays lip service to equal opportunities for all, we are still a long way from true equality. The fact is that college graduates have significantly better opportunities in life than non-college graduates, and that people with access to the full range of financial aid have a much better chance of attending college than those who do not, like undocumented immigrants. We know that Governor Cuomo understands this and supports equal access to affordable education. Now it is time for him to extend that support to the NY DREAM Act, and to show other states how to lead on this issue.

AILA-NY is committed to continuing our advocacy in support of the federal DREAM Act, whose time will come. But in the meantime, while Congress remains incapable of doing the right thing, we pledge our support to the City Council, the NY State Youth Leadership Council and all the groups and individuals working to make life a little better for DREAMers. They are our future, and the quicker those in power realize it – and take action to allow them to pursue their educational and professional dreams – the better off we will be.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Michael Mandel

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March 20, 2012

New York City Council
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Testimony of Camille J. Mackler in support of NY DREAM Act

My name is Camille Mackler. I am an immigration attorney practicing in New York City. I am also a member of the American Immigration Lawyer's Association (AILA) and the New York Chapter's Media and Advocacy Committee. My practice focuses primarily on family-based immigration, defense of removal, and asylum/refugee law. I have represented several DREAMers before US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). I strongly believe that passing the New York DREAM Act is both an economic necessity and a moral imperative..

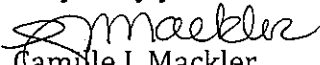
One day last week I met with Jordana Vera in a small visitation room in Delaney Hall. Jordana was brought to the US by her mother at twelve years old and unknowingly overstayed the ninety-days allowed her under the visa waiver program. At twenty-three years old, she was arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) when officers came to her home looking for her brother, who had an outstanding removal order. They refused to produce a warrant, even when asked, and took Jordana into custody despite her having no arrest record and no other immigration violations. When Jordana refused to board a plane to Argentina, she was transferred to Hudson County Jail, where she spent her twenty-fourth birthday. She has been detained for eight months. She did not board that plane last August because she did not want to leave her only home, her entire family, and her friends. Last week, she told me she was ready to go if she had to stay in detention much longer. When I asked her what had changed, she looked at me with tears in her eyes and told me "I'm so disappointed in this country."

There is no doubt that passing the New York DREAM Act makes economic sense. Currently, even with access to in-state tuition, college remains unaffordable to many undocumented students who do not qualify for much financial aid and who cannot legally work to help pay for school. However, allowing these students to obtain a higher education will directly benefit New York State. Studies have shown that each person entering the New York work force after obtaining a college degree will pay on average between \$1,000 (for a two year degree) and \$3,800 (for a four year degree) in additional State taxes. Additionally, a state with a more educated work force is also a state with a more productive workforce, making it more attractive to businesses. The US Department of Labor has estimated that in the future, ninety percent of jobs will require a post-secondary education. Moreover, the cost of the New York DREAM Act would be minimal, compared to its benefits. Extending the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) to include undocumented students would only raise the total cost by approximately two percent.

However, passing the New York DREAM Act is also a moral imperative. These children, through no fault of their own, have been raised in the United States and do not identify with the countries of their births. Many only speak English, which often makes it impossible for them to pursue a higher education in their countries of origin. They have been valuable members of our communities through school projects and extra-curricular activities. By passing the New York DREAM Act, New York State would fulfill a promise that we must all make our children: that if you study hard, and work hard, good things will come. New York State government would also fulfill a promise it must make to all of its citizens: that we live in a society that values those who set the bar high, who work to achieve those goals, and who contribute to their community. And young men and women like Jordana, who have never knowingly violated our laws, who have paid their taxes, worked hard, and sacrificed, would never again have to feel let down by the State they call "home".

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Very truly yours,


Camille J. Mackler

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March 20, 2012

Committee on Immigration/Committee on Higher Education
250 Broadway, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: Testimony in Support of Res No. 803 (New York Dream Act) and Res. No. 1219 (New York DREAM Fund)

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is L. Batya Schwartz Ehrens. I am an immigration lawyer and a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), the nation's largest professional organization of immigration lawyers. I have served for several years as the co-chair of AILA's New York Chapter New Members Division (NMD), as well as on the steering committee of the AILA National NMD. I am also a member of AILA's New York Advocacy and Corporate Practice committees. Additionally, I am involved as an activist with several other immigrant advocacy organizations.

I realized that immigration law was my calling about 7 years ago, after a chance encounter with a taxi driver during a brief visit to New York. After learning that I had recently graduated from law school, my taxi driver told me that his high-school age daughter wanted to be a lawyer, and asked me if I could give her some advice. As a recent (unemployed) graduate, I felt I was in no position to be giving advice, but agreed to speak with her. As we exchanged phone numbers, the driver said, "Oh, there's one more thing. I brought my family to the U.S. when my children were young, and we all overstayed our visas. My daughter is about to take the S.A.T.'s. She doesn't know that she has no social security numbers. I do not know if she can go to college, but I am scared to tell her about her status. Can you help us?"

At that point, I hardly knew what a visa was, but I left the taxi knowing that I wanted to help my taxi driver's daughter, because it was unjust that her future was limited through no fault or decision of her own. I am still in touch with the taxi driver and his daughter. When we first spoke, she was about 16 years old. She asked me what it meant for her future to have no social security number, and I told her about the DREAM Act which had been introduced in Congress. Since that time, she has graduated from John Jay College with both a Bachelors and Masters degree because she was able to pay in-state tuition, and still hopes to go to law school where in-state tuition will not be sufficient. She understands that she will not be able to qualify for most types of financial assistance, and that she will not be able to work during or after law school in order to support herself or gain experience. She dreams of the DREAM Act.

This episode of my life introduced me to my first DREAM student, but as I committed myself more deeply to immigration advocacy work, I started to see DREAMers everywhere. I have met kids in elementary schools, students in universities like CUNY, SUNY, and NYU pursuing rigorous academic programs, young people working (without authorization or protection) to support their families, and many others doing charity and volunteer work.

The passage of the Federal DREAM Act is the only pathway to legal immigration status for children and students who have grown up in the United States. However, in the absence of federal legislation addressing the needs of this vulnerable population, the proposed New York State Resolutions Nos. 803 and 1219 are a critical component to help undocumented immigrant youth survive and thrive in New York.

Several states, including California and Texas, have introduced and passed legislation similar to Res. Nos. 803 and 1219. New York is home to the third largest population of undocumented immigrant youth in the United States, a statistic which emphasizes the significance of this legislation. Although the reach of such state legislation is limited to state benefits, financial assistance through a DREAM fund, the opportunity to hold a state job, obtain a drivers license or ID card, receive state financial aid, and become eligible to participate in NY state insurance programs, these benefits will have a significant impact on the lives and opportunities of the undocumented youth who have grown up in New York.

These resolutions are limited in their reach, but are an essential starting point for the youth of New York. Further, they make sense from both a humanitarian perspective and from an economic perspective. Undocumented students who have more access to higher education will have more opportunities to rise to become the top earners in New York, supporting themselves, their families, and ultimately their communities.

As a member of the New York Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, I offer this testimony on behalf of every student and child in New York who faces economic and legal obstacles interfering with their educational and professional goals due to their undocumented immigration status. This legislation serves not only as a doorway to opportunities for New York's talented and determined youth, but also as a lighthouse to the rest of the United States as other states consider similar legislation, and ultimately to Congress as it highlights the urgency for action on a federal level.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



L. Batya Schwartz Ehrens
Attorney at Law

**Testimony of Assemblymember Guillermo Linares,
Prime Sponsor of the New York Dream Act**

**Before the New York City Council Committees on Immigration and Higher Education
Hearing on the New York Dream Act
Tuesday, March 20, 2012 at 1:00 p.m. in the 14th Floor Committee Room, 250 Broadway,
New York, NY**

First, I would like to thank Councilmember Ydanis Rodriguez, Chairman of the Higher Education Committee and Councilmember Daniel Dromm, Chairman of the Immigration Committee not only for holding this important hearing on the NY Dream Act, but also for taking a stand on behalf of these undocumented students.

As the prime sponsor of the New York Dream Act and as an immigrant who had the opportunity to obtain an education in the United States, I urge for the passage of this important legislation.

With the Federal DREAM legislation stalled, New York must join states like California, Texas, Illinois and New Mexico, which have shown leadership by passing legislation to provide financial assistance to undocumented students.

Each year, thousands of undocumented students nationwide graduate from high school with no hope of pursuing their dreams because of their ineligibility for financial aid. The New York Dream Act (A6829B) would support the extension of the State's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) all students, regardless of immigration status, opening the doors to a brighter future for these undocumented students.

The days ahead are critical as we negotiate this year's budget. According to a cost-benefit analysis conducted by the Fiscal Policy Institute, Extending TAP to include eligible undocumented students would represent a minimum increase of 2% to current TAP aid. Only a 2% increase to current TAP would allow us to respond to the needs of these undocumented students who are among New York State's best and brightest.

Investing in the dreams of our immigrant youth is not only the moral thing to do. It is a social and economic imperative. It is common knowledge that higher education provides a very strong return on investment. The median earned income of a New York State worker with a bachelor's degree is \$25,000 higher per year than for a worker with just a high school degree. The more highly educated a state's labor force is, the more attractive that state is as a place to locate businesses.

I can't think of a better investment to New York State than allowing undocumented youth access to higher education. A two percent increase to the current Tuition Assistant Program should not be such a difficult investment.

The New York Dream Act has the full support of New York City Mayor, Michael R. Bloomberg, City Council Speaker, Christine Quinn, U. S Senator Kristen Gellibrand, our State's entire education system, the Regents, State Education Department, CUNY, SUNY, teachers and labor unions, not to mention broader support from business, interfaith, and civil rights communities.

As a beacon of hope and opportunity for generations of immigrants, New York must show the nation that equal access to education for all individuals is not only core to our values, but essential to our economic progress.

Furthermore, New York State has a long history of advocating and protecting the rights of immigrants. This legacy should not be compromised now. I respectfully appeal to New York State Governor Cuomo and the Legislature's leadership and urge them take a stand on behalf of our immigrant communities. I am confident that this year we are going to have a victory and will finally be able to make the NY Dream Act a reality.

Sincerely,

Guillermo Linares
Member of the Assembly
72nd Assembly District

Testimony by Arline Herrera

Tuesday, March 20, 2012

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen of the Council,

My name is Arline Herrera and it is an honor to stand before you today to express the importance of the New York State DREAM Act for undocumented immigrants like myself. I was born in Mexico yet I migrated to the United States when I was only five months old. I came with my mother and my sister and we reunited with my father here in New York. Growing up in the Bronx, I dreamed of becoming a teacher. With a small blackboard and my hands covered in chalk, I use to pretend to teach my teddy bears the alphabet. However, when I was in high school, I realized that my dreams were practically unreachable due to my immigration status. I am not eligible for financial aid, loans or scholarships and therefore my chances of going to college were slim. This is not my story alone, but rather the story of many young people who, regardless of their outstanding grades, are unable to access higher education due to their immigration status. These are aspiring engineers, lawyers, doctors, architects, whose dreams they must painfully surrender. Considering New York State's rich history of immigration, from the first Dutch settlers, to the newcomers in Ellis Island, this state should not fail to recognize the potential of its migrant population. This state should not permit this injustice but rather it should acknowledge and embrace the talents of all individuals. With private scholarships and the help of my parents, I was able to attend the City College of New York. Yet I am currently not enrolled for I was unable to afford the increased tuition. Nevertheless, I believe that soon I will stop dreaming about DREAM Act, and I will soon experience the DREAM Act. My dream is to complete my education and become a bilingual elementary school teacher. I want to make a difference in those crowded bilingual classrooms in the South Bronx and help every child learn. Overall, by providing the financial resources necessary, undocumented students in New York will be one step closer to achieving their American Dream! Pass the New York DREAM Act and help us give back to the state we call home. Pass the New York DREAM Act and help us reach our dreams!

Thank you.

March 20, 2012

Written Testimony of Geovanny Lopez

Re:

Res. No. 803 - Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, the New York Dream Act, which would grant certain benefits to eligible undocumented immigrants.

Res. No. 1219 - Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation establishing the New York DREAM fund commission, which will advance the educational opportunities of children of immigrants through scholarship programs for higher education.

Hello my name is Geovanny and I am undocumented. I am a member of the New York State Youth Council. I was born in Ecuador and came to the United States when I was 5 years old. Like any immigrant I struggled to learn the English language and adapt to the American culture. I soon began to excel in my classes and was even awarded the Presidential award twice before going into high school. Unfortunately when I was sixteen I arrived one morning to a house surrounded by ICE. My mom was being deported at that moment and as I stood there, held back by a police officer unable to do anything, I cried. To this day, after 5 long years, I have yet to see my mom's face again. Not to soon after my mom's deportation my little sister, at only 6 years old, followed her and moved to Ecuador. I made the difficult decision to stay in this country, alone, to continue my education and to send money to my family so that my sister could continue studying as well.

My mother's \$8 a day job was barely enough to pay for their essentials not to mention my sister's school. So I worked many long hours trying to keep up with my bills and responsibilities, while somehow maintaining my grades above average. Senior year came and went faster than I care admit. Graduating in the top five of my class was something I should have been proud of but with no one but my friends to see me receive my diploma, I felt empty. College became my next step and my dreams to be a doctor held firm in my mind. Without financial aid the Suffolk Community College became my one and only choice to continue school. The work load was bearable but paying two and half grand a semester, out of pocket, was the most painful. With a limit on what jobs I could get and often the jobs open to me were minimum wage paying jobs, raising that money while keeping up bills was excruciating.

My families well being and my education became my main priority which at times would lead me to go hungry. One day my hunger led me to Shop Rite with the intent on stealing food and easing my hunger pain. I was arrested that day and my life plunged into fear. Fear that Iâ€™d lose everything I had worked for, that I'd be deported and neither my sister nor I could continue school. My savings and hard work had all gone to school or to support my family and now from one simple urge to survive, I had committed a crime that would uproot all my hopes and dreams. Fortunately the judge took pity on me and cleared my charges. Some of my undocumented friends did not have my luck. The lack of money to continue school led them to drugs, depression and worse. Those that committed crimes and were caught were soon deported, these kids that were once dreamers themselves. The Dream Act would provide hope that our dreams to

be something greater(doctors, lawyers, architects and more) can still be a reality. It would keep aspiring kids from going down the wrong path from lack of help.

Even though it took me close to three years to graduate community because of lack of time, sleep, money and health, I still did it, I became the first one in my family to start and graduate college. The next step to another college seems impossible without the dream act. My hopes are slowly shattering and my will fading but I grasp to the little that remains knowing that if the Dream Act passes all my hard work would not have been unfruitful. I may be undocumented, I may have been born in another country but I am no less American than any one person born in this great land. I ask that you provide me and kids like me a beam of light to continue our dreams. The Dream Act is the only hope we have to keep us moving forward, and without hope what do we live for.

Good afternoon Council Members,

My name is Nataly Lopez, and I am an undocumented student. At the age of four, I stepped foot on American soil and have lived here ever since. I grew up, pledging allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands and believing in a just country from the time I attended kindergarten to the day I graduated high school. Ladies and gentlemen, I still believe this is a just country and continues to grow as a just country, serving the people that call America home.

We have arrived at the cross roads for America; we are at a time where decisions will impact the lives of thousand people, of young people specifically, with dreams of grandeur and ideas to make the country a better place for all. But in New York itself, there lies untapped potential. Undocumented youth are forced to withdraw from dreams and lead a life keeping to the shadows and never reaching their true potential. But no more will this be the standard. We are no different than our classmates who sit next to us in our classes, who laugh with us during lunch hours, who study with us for midterms and finals. We are no different from your children, who have grown up in America and we feel no different from them. As parents, you would want what was best for your child, including a college education and a degree so they can fulfill their dreams. What if your child was undocumented and had the doors of opportunity and success slammed in their face after they worked so hard to get the top grades in high school.

The undocumented students of New York, live to see the day where they can work as doctors, lawyers, accountants, artists, and musicians but how can they when they are refused a scholarship, grants or access to FAFSA itself. This is why we are here today, to ask for Tuition Assistance Program to be open to all students who are eligible regardless of their immigration status. We are asking for the doors of opportunity, success and prosperity to be opened once more and our hopes and dreams to become a reality.

Factions within our government seek to deter the dreams of all of us. They say that we are stealing jobs and creating more headaches for the system. But in reality, the current system is a headache in itself.

There are those who argue that giving undocumented students' access to the Tuition Assistance Program raises fiscal expenditures exponentially. That's simply not true. In fact, last week the nonpartisan Fiscal Policy Institute published estimates on an increase in tuition expenditures under the proposed bill – expenditures would increase 2% annually.

To Governor Cuomo, and the New York State Legislature: pass this tuition bill today. By spending 2% more in tuition expenditures annually, YOU will open a door of opportunities for talented, highly-skilled students, and most importantly, YOU will create new jobs for the people of New York.

I am here to ask everyone who is listening, who is watching and those who are fumbling their thumbs, to allow me to fulfill my dream of opening up my own company. Thereby, creating jobs for those unemployed and giving back to the economy and our beloved state.

Ladies and gentleman, I am an American. I want to be able to have a job, so I can pay my taxes, to not worry about counting how many hours per week I have to work below minimum wage to reach those \$2,805 for next semester. I want to be able to walk down the street and know that I can and will be able to graduate from college, get my bachelors and master's degree and soon my Ph.D.

It began with a dream, but for New York, it will be a reality.

Thank you, and have a wonderful afternoon.

My name is Cristopher Chavez. I was born in Mexico and raised in in the Bronx, a Yankees fan since I can remember. I have been living in the Fordham road neighborhood for almost 20 years. I am proud of my neighborhood because it reflects the working class families trying to make a living everyday, juggling many jobs, encouraging their children to continue their education to better themselves. Like many in this room, I come from a hardworking family that migrated to this country looking for a better future for my sister and I. They are not criminals, as some people intend to portray them, but instead they are the most loving, caring parents anyone can imagine; they are the ones who have had to sacrifice many things to give me and my sister the opportunities they did not have.

I was not a straight A student but yet I was able to strive and graduate from middle school. I did not know what I wanted to do with myself but I did know that I wanted to be able to support my parents as they have always supported me. Seeing the hard work of my sister and my family gave me the determination I needed to continue with my education. What I did not know is that by being undocumented my road to college was going to be much difficult. But with the support of my family and a few professors who believed in me, against all the odds, an average kid from the Bronx successfully enrolled and graduated with an associate in mathematics from Bronx Community College. In fact, it was in BCC where I met the math tutor who would later inspire me to pursue a bachelor's degree in Math at Lehman College, where I am currently in my last semester.

My road to college was everything but easy. I worked two jobs while going to school full time. I resiliently dealt with the frustration of an uncertain future, with the fear to be separated from my family. I, after all the challenges, consider myself very lucky because I had the unconditional emotional and at times financial support of my family, who even if they were struggling to pay for the monthly rent would help me cover tuition in order to make their son's college education a reality. They were there for me. Unfortunately, that is not the case for many other young undocumented students who see college as an unattainable dream, due to the high tuition even in the public university of New York.

Once I enrolled in Lehman, I knew I wanted to create a group that will give undocumented students like myself the space to express themselves while supporting each other to get involved and finally take charge of their own future. That is the main reason why I, with the help of other passionate Lehman students, created the Lehman College Dream Team, the first dream team part of the Dream Campus Network supported by the New York State Youth Leadership Council. I am proud to be a Lehman student, as much as I am proud to say that I am undocumented. Because I am no longer afraid to say that I am ready to make a change, to share my story with those who try to dehumanize me and even those who terrorize my communities.

It is in Lehman College that I became part of the Lehman College Student Government. Being in SGA has made me see how the simplest of things can become the most abstract and most complex. Nevertheless, it has also made me

open my eyes to seeing the bigger picture of why someone chooses to hold office, that is to serve those that have put him/her in office and to help voice the struggles that may still be unheard of. It is in this same spirit that I am most pleased to say that this past Sunday the CUNY University Student Senate unanimous passed the resolution supporting the passage of the NY State Dream Act. As student representatives they have done their part on making sure the voices of the student bodies they represent respectively, are heard. Thus, showing once more that many support undocumented youth dreams to continue their college education by opening the access to tuition assistance programs. So let us not forget that as accountable representatives of students or constituents you and I have the equal responsibility to listen and act to bring solution to the struggles they face.

I am here today on behalf of many other undocumented youth who attend CUNY, who as myself are still going through difficult times to continue their education. I am here to make sure that our voices, those of the undocumented youth who are not the poster child but yet who have big dreams to succeed and make it in this concrete jungle are very well heard. We cannot let our voices and stories be lost in political games. Our lives cannot be forgotten by the state that has promised us so much. New York has a chance to provide us with some relief to continue our academic dreams; today I join the call upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and Governor Cuomo to sign, the New York Dream Act A.06829/S.04179, which would grant the opportunity to receive tuition assistance program to eligible undocumented immigrants. Signing and adding the NY Dream Act in the executive budget is not only fair to the children of New York but it is an opportunity for our great state to take a stand and lead the country to a more just future for all.



**TESTIMONY OF THE
NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP (NYPIRG)
BEFORE A JOINT HEARING OF THE
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES ON IMMIGRATION AND HIGHER
EDUCATION
REGARDING THE NEW YORK DREAM ACT
MARCH 20, 2012**

Good afternoon. My name is John Dimandja. I am a student at the Borough of Manhattan Community College and I work with my college's chapter of the New York Public Interest Research Group. On behalf of the students working with NYPIRG across New York City, I appreciate this opportunity to share our perspective on the New York DREAM Act.

NYPIRG is a non-partisan research and advocacy organization. Our Board of Directors consists entirely of college and university students like me. For 39 years, students working with NYPIRG have fought for a more just and sustainable New York by advancing important public interest issues like affordable higher education.

I am here today to express our support for City Council Resolution Number 803, "calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, the New York Dream Act."

In today's economy, a college degree is the most important step on the ladder of success. People who have a degree earn a million dollars more than those who do not over the course of their lives. So for millions for New Yorkers, a college education represents the opportunity to pursue the American Dream. Unfortunately, for thousands who pay taxes and call America their home, that dream is being deferred.

That is why we are calling on the City Council to pass this resolution in support of the New York DREAM Act. We believe that education is a fundamental right and that access to it should be universal. And in order to achieve universal access, financial aid opportunities like the Tuition Assistance Program *must* be available to all of our high school graduates, regardless of immigration status.

Tuition Assistance Program

TAP was created in 1974 "to maximize access to higher education for all qualified students."¹ NYPIRG supports the DREAM Act [A.6829-B (Linares)/S.4179-B (Perkins)], which would allow eligible undocumented students to apply for TAP. Students who have called New York

¹ *New York's Tuition Assistance Program-A History*, New York State Higher Education Services Corporation. Accessed at www.hesc.com/content.nsf/CA/Appendix_E_New_Yorks_Tuition_Assistance_Program_A_History.

State their home for the majority of their lives deserve the opportunities that financial aid provides.

Economic Advantage

There is a hefty economic advantage that New York stands to benefit from by enabling undocumented immigrants to attain a college degree. As noted in a recent report by the Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI), the additional taxes paid by a New Yorker with a bachelor's degree to state and local taxes alone is \$3,900 a year.² In a time when New York's tax base has diminished, should we forego this opportunity to generate new revenue from a better equipped labor force? Clearly, this is an opportunity to make a sound investment in New York's future. Especially when extending TAP to eligible undocumented students would increase TAP expenditures by just 2% each year.

Lost Opportunity

According to NYSYLC, an estimated 146,000 New Yorkers who have gone to our public schools to be educated by our teachers are ineligible to receive financial aid under state and federal law. The vast majority are unable to pursue a college degree due to financial obstacles. With only 5-10% of undocumented students able to afford to go on to college, our investment in their success is cut short. It is time that we complete our investment in their futures by expanding financial aid opportunities.

In Closing

Many tough choices have to be made to get the economy back on track. Investing in New York's students can provide the educated labor pool that attracts businesses to our state. College graduates are more than twice as likely to be employed compared to their peers who have only a high school degree, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics.³ Helping New Yorkers, no matter their immigration status, to become qualified through higher education to get the jobs they need should be a top priority for the state.

Appropriate New York DREAM Act legislation, outlined in City Council Resolution Number 803, could help create an equal playing field for all of our students. New York needs to join California, Texas, and New Mexico, in providing undocumented immigrant students access to state financial aid through TAP.

Thank you for providing this opportunity for us to share our thoughts on the New York DREAM Act. We look forward to working with you to ensure that a college education is accessible and affordable, for everyone, here in New York.

²Fiscal Policy Institute, *The New York State DREAM Act: A preliminary estimate of costs and benefits*, March 9, 2012. Accessed at: <http://www.fiscalpolicy.org/FPI-CostBenefitAnalysis-NYS-DREAM-Act-20120309.pdf>.

³*Economic News Release*, Table A-4, Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 6, 2012, *Employment Status of Civilian Population 25 Years or Over by Educational Attainment*. Accessed at www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t04.htm.

Good afternoon City Council Members,

READ INTO
RECORDS

Thank you for the opportunity to come before you and testify on behalf of my Union brothers and sisters.

My name is **Enma Mehmedovic** and I am member of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 32BJ.

32BJ members come from 64 different countries, speak 28 different languages, and represent workers across the East Coast.

Our members, who include commercial office cleaners, security officers, building engineers, window washers, food service workers, custodians, and maintenance workers keep buildings and institutions running throughout the state.

It is on behalf of our members, and in recognition of the important contributions they make to New York's economy and communities, that I am here to testify in support of Resolution #803, calling on New York State to enact legislation that would help provide equal access to higher education for all students in the state.

As a mother of two, with my daughter applying to college and my son going to high school next year, I know the fear of not being able to help my kids succeed. I came to this country from the Dominican Republic to build a better life for myself and family, and with the help of the Union I've been able to do just that, but it's getting harder and harder.

I teach my kids that if they work hard and believe in themselves, they can accomplish anything, but that doesn't seem to be so true anymore. It's unfair that hardworking students cannot attend college because of their immigration status or lack of money. That goes against everything I thought this country was about. I believe everyone has a right to go to college.

I'm lucky to be a member of a union that is committed to education as a way for members to improve their lives. Our Thomas Shortman Fund offers academic scholarships to members and their children who have been accepted into college. While that goes a long way, it's still not enough because college is so expensive.

Families like mine don't have access to enough funds for college and any opportunity is greatly appreciated. My daughter and I spend hours every week looking for scholarships and filling out application forms. It's very difficult for us. I can't imagine what it must be like for undocumented students who are blocked from the opportunities that we have.

And that's why my Union brothers and sisters support Dream legislation.

We believe we must do everything possible to help all students in New York gain better access to the financial assistance that they need to pursue their educational goals and life aspirations. We understand the importance of investing in talented people and working to create real opportunities for all students, documented and undocumented, to attend college in order to offer them real hope for their futures.

Thank you

Good Afternoon Hon. Council Members,

My name is Alejandro Madi, I am currently a student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. I am here to today to speak on behalf of many of my dear and close friends, and the students from across our city that happens to be undocumented.

You see, these are all young men and women who throughout most of their lives, they have lived and grown up thinking and believing they were Americans. I have a friend who graduated from high school with a 100 in her report card, and in the process of applying for college, she found out she was undocumented. Thus, with working class parents and a brother already in college, she couldn't afford to go to the college of her dreams. I have another friend, who at the end of his senior year in high school, he was approached by Harvard, Columbia, and Cornell given his impressive scores in the science and math regents, which by the way were one of the highest in the whole state of New York. Yet, because of his status he could not reach higher, because he was undocumented, his success was limited to whatever the law granted him. It was with sadness that we found ourselves in December of 2010, when the US Senate killed the Dream Act even though it had a majority of votes. For more than 1.3 million dreamers from across our country, it was yet another opportunity for success crushed by bigotry and xenophobia.

Today, New York can make a difference for the tens of thousands of "Americans" who happen to be undocumented; to be able to be provided with an assistance and security so that they too can be part of this great nation. *The State Dream Act* will allow our working class students to be able to receive state financial assistances without any discrimination against their status. The Dream Act Fund will greatly help all of those students who are brilliant at what they do, to be able to receive private scholarships so that they too can attend our prestigious New York private schools. You see, we might have the next Albert Einstein, or Steve Jobs within one of those Dreamers, but by denying them the chance to succeed, we ourselves are denying our country the ability to stay competitive. As president Obama said in 2011 *"let's stop expelling talented, responsible young people who could be staffing our research labs or starting a new business, who could be further enriching this nation."*

Let us put pressure on our state legislators, and more importantly on our governor, for him to finally come out and defend this group that has been marginalized by the pity politics of yesterday. I applaud the City Council on this very important resolution, and I hope that Albany can actually listen and see that although nationally it's toxic to talk about the Dreamers. New York can make a difference! because we do not put our heads down whenever an issue gets too complicated, we rise to the occasion and we lead as an empire state can only do: And We are that state. LETS US PASS THESE RESOLUTIONS and send a clear message to ALBANY: WE WANT THE DREAM ACT!

**Testimony of Michael Fabricant
Professional Staff Congress/CUNY
Before the Joint Hearing of the Higher Education and Immigration Committees**

**In support of Council resolutions supporting state Dream Legislation
to extend college financial aid to undocumented students**

March 20, 2011

On behalf of the 25,000 members of Professional Staff Congress, I wish to thank Committee Chairpersons Rodriguez and Dromm and the members of the Council's Higher Education and Immigration Committees for the opportunity to speak in support of the Council resolutions urging passage of state Dream legislation, which would extend financial aid to undocumented immigrant students who graduate high school or earn a GED in New York State.

We are proud that a decade ago New York State extended access to a college education to undocumented immigrant students by allowing them to pay in-state tuition rates at CUNY and SUNY if they attend a New York high school for two years and graduate, or earn a GED here. New York has been a leader in this regard and the in-state tuition law has made it possible for thousands of undocumented students to obtain a college degree. An estimated 4,500 undocumented students now attend CUNY and many more would be able to if needs-based financial aid was available to them.

Our members see first-hand the heroic efforts that immigrant students make to attend college. They are hungry for a college education, and like the majority of CUNY students, come from families of very modest financial means. Fully 54% of all CUNY undergraduates come from households with annual income under \$30,000; 38% get by on income less than \$20,000. It is common for these students to work full time while going to college. Frequently, they must take time off from school to earn enough money to pay for the next semester's tuition and fees.

Students who are the children of immigrants (that is, they are first-generation Americans) and immigrant students who have permanent legal status are able to overcome many of these financial hurdles with the help of federal Pell Grants and the state Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). Undocumented students, however, are barred from these programs. It is also worth noting that undocumented students do not have access to bank loans to finance their education. The one large, publically-funded scholarship program that was available to undocumented students at CUNY in the past was the Peter Vallone Scholarship program. Sadly, the Vallone program was discontinued last spring.

The ability to pay in-state tuition at CUNY is an enormous benefit for undocumented immigrant students. But as you are aware tuition is rising. State law passed last August authorizes CUNY to increase senior college tuition \$300 per year, and tuition will rise from \$5,301 this year to \$6,330 by the 2015-16 academic year. If community college tuition rises by the same amount as is anticipated, tuition will increase from \$3,600 this year to \$4,800 by 2015. Without access to financial aid or grants, undocumented students at CUNY who have to pay the whole "sticker price" may not be able to continue their education at such prices.

The PSC strongly supports the Committees' resolution calling on the Governor and Legislature to pass the New York Dream legislation. In addition, we would urge you to combine support for both pieces of legislation with support for legislation introduced by the New York Board of Regents (A 9344). This bill also extends TAP grants to undocumented students and provides access to New York's 529 college saving program.

We note that the Dream Fund legislation (A 8689/ S 6071) provides scholarships from a public-private fund to citizen and legal resident children of immigrants *as well as* undocumented children. The PSC strongly supports expanding financial aid to all low-income students. However, in this context, we feel the priority should be given to undocumented students, as citizen and legal resident students have access to federal Pell and state TAP grants. Finally, we ask the Council to consider restoring the Vallone Scholarships in this year's budget process. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**Testimony by Sofia Carreno, Interim Communications and College Relations Specialist,
CUNY Citizenship Now!
before**

The New York City Council

Immigration Committee

Tuesday, March 20, 2012

Good afternoon Chairman Dromm and members of the New York City Council Immigration Committee. My name is Sofia Carreno. I am the Interim Communications and College Relations Specialist of CUNY Citizenship Now!

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of Chancellor Matthew Goldstein and the University in support of the principles inherent in the New York State Dream Act. Chancellor Goldstein has issued a statement expressing his strong support for legislation that will allow undocumented students to receive New York State funded financial aid.

Before I continue, as a former CUNY student, I would like to commend the City Council, members of this Committee and its chair, for its ongoing support for the empowerment of New York's immigrant youth. Having attended two CUNY colleges and as a former student government activist, I am aware of the many difficulties faced by undocumented students.

CUNY supports equality and access for all those in pursuit of higher education. Chancellor Goldstein was one of the first University Chancellors or Presidents to write to Congress in support of the federal Dream Act. While Congress has yet to act, CUNY remains hopeful that in

the next two years, Congress will recognize the incredible potential that will be unleashed when the federal Dream Act becomes law. Meanwhile, New York can join California, New Mexico and Texas by easing the path to a college education for undocumented youth by providing access to financial aid.

We like to call CUNY the immigrant-friendly university yet despite our efforts, access to higher education is unavailable to many undocumented students. As undocumented students are ineligible for state and federal financial aid, many cannot afford to study at all and others are forced to study part-time. While CUNY makes privately funded scholarships, available to undocumented students, these programs are available only to a small group.

Limitations placed on our financial aid programs by state and federal law means that undocumented students are barred from receiving TAP, Pell and other government financed programs. This needs to change. As Chancellor Goldstein noted in his November 2011 statement on the New York State Dream Act:

Students who graduate from a New York State high school should be eligible to receive government-supported financial assistance. If they have earned their high school degrees in New York, and under state law are eligible to attend public colleges, they ought to have access to the support they need to advance their education—especially at a time when New York needs a skilled workforce.

At CUNY we make every effort to make CUNY available to undocumented and other immigrant students. Through CUNY Citizenship Now!, we help thousands of students on the path to U.S. citizenship. CUNY's is the most comprehensive college or university based immigration legal service program in the country. The project now has six campus-based immigration law assistance centers providing comprehensive immigration law services free to all New Yorkers. In the last fiscal year alone we helped 11,507 New Yorkers with their immigration law needs, including helping 4,164 with U.S. citizenship.

The University remains deeply committed to maintaining its proud tradition of welcoming and educating all immigrants. That tradition was forged over many generations and is reflected in the extraordinary diversity of our student body. We wholeheartedly support efforts to pass state legislation that will allow undocumented students to qualify for New York State financial aid and urge this committee to do what it can to make that dream a reality.

I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have at this time.

My name is John Moreno-Escobar

I'm the Executive Director and Founder of Latino Youth for Higher Education Program

LYHEP is a not for profit organization that provides College readiness awareness programs for recent immigrant Latinos in New York City. LYHEP is made up of minority immigrants, both professionals and college students who focus on promoting college awareness in minority middle and high school students and their families. We especially work with Latinos that have recently arrived in the country. This goal is addressed through the creation of workshops, tutoring, college visits, and supporting undocumented Latino minorities with scholarships and fundraising activities in order to assist in closing the achievement gap.

Nearly 40% of New York City residents are immigrants, 20% are undocumented, accordingly to the Pew Institute analysis of the 2000 census. The DREAM act will allow these young people to come out of their shadows, feel productive after high School, enter a community College or a Senior College, graduate and have the opportunity to unleash all their potential. Many students in the New York City High Schools drop out, because they don't have any hope of getting into college, as a consequence of their immigration status. Also is important to mention that this State has been always characterized by been progressive and that's why not just the State government is looking into the bill, but the New York Board of Regents has started to draft their own bill; **"The Board of Regents would write their own draft of the legislation, which would be similar to state bills introduced in March that would open up opportunities for undocumented students to receive scholarships, obtain driver's licenses and practice a profession. They must also have come to the United States before the age of 16 and have lived at least two years in the state. Unlike the federal DREAM Act, the New York bill would not permit granting students legal status...The state bill is expected to ease access to higher education for about 345,000 students across New York...The regents' draft, however, also wouldn't expand to undocumented students access to driver's licenses or health care"**ⁱ, many of the students that are undocumented in the State of New York, usually are part of their honor society, presidents or active members of their students governments, have outstanding SAT, GED or ACT scores. The New York City Council already demonstrated that

this legislation will help the City of New York in resolution 803: **“...Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, the New York Dream Act, which would grant certain benefits to eligible undocumented immigrants”**

During the last 5 years my organization has been working with Latino and minority students to help them to achieve their dreams. Our program started at Pan American International HS, a school that is composed of 100% Latinos and they all have to be recent immigrants (Less than 5 years in the United States) in order to be in the school. Many of them are undocumented. We work with their families, we make college possible for them. Today, I'm here with a student and a graduate of that school, they are DREAMERS, they have helped many of their peers, with their college application, regardless of knowing that they don't have the same options. I believe in your leadership and vision, of a country a state that can be equal, and receives all these students with love. They are honor students, they are leaders, they love this state, this country.

Please use all your political power to make College a REALITY for these students. Gandhi said once “The future depends on what we do in the present.”

My name is Catherin Ardila and I am 17 years old. My parents decided to bring me to the United States from Colombia when I was just 10 years old. I had no option; I could not choose I just had to do it. I came thinking that it would not be for too long. I thought I would go back and see my grandmother and the rest of my family again but as you can all see I am still here. My grandmother died 2 years ago without me having the opportunity to see her again or saying good bye. I remember once my grandma telling me to never give up and to fight for everything I wanted, to no let obstacles take over my life.

Today I am doing what she told me, I am fighting for what I know is the best for my future and for the future of many people who went through many struggles to be in this country. I am currently a high school student and I am graduating on June, 2012. During my years in high school Latino Youth for Higher Education (LYHEP) has guided me and showed me that there are many opportunities for Latino youth but they have also thought me that you have to work hard for what you want, nothing will just come to you for free. LYHEP have also guide me throughout this last 3 years and showed me the right path to get into college. They have motivated me to go on with my life but most important to never forget about the ones who will be on the same spot I am today and my obligation to help them.

This has been one of the toughest years I have ever been through, but who said that the senior year was easy? Well it is never easy for normal high school students, but it is harder for undocumented students. I had to see all my peers' applying to their dream college and filling their FAFSA while I had to think about how I am going to pay for my college years. It has been a really difficult year for me and many others, and even though I could not apply to FAFSA, I learned the whole process to be a youth leader at my school and help my peers so they can go to college and make a difference.

The Dream Act is important because it will benefit students like me, students who did not choose to come to this country, students who actually care about how hard their parents had to work for them to be here and have more opportunities in life. The Dream Act would benefit The United States and New York state as a whole, because it will give the country the opportunity to have more educated people, people who are working because they care, because is their passion, and because they just want a better future. I urge you to support the dream act!

Education is power, is life and is the only way of paying back to all the parents their hard work and everything they had to go through for us to be here!

Thank you all.



137-139 West 25th Street
12th Floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 627-2227
www.thenyic.org

Testimony before the New York City Council Immigration Committee

March 20th 2012

Jackie Vimo
Director of Advocacy
New York Immigration Coalition

Good afternoon. My name is Jackie Vimo, and I am the Director of Advocacy at the New York Immigration Coalition, an umbrella organization for almost 200 organizations that work with immigrants across New York State. I would like to thank Speaker Quinn, Chairman Dromm and other members of the Immigration Committee for holding this important hearing today on DREAM legislation in New York State. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today alongside many DREAMers will be directly affected by this crucial legislation. I am also here as a founder and Steering Committee member of the New York State DREAM Coalition, a coalition of about 30 faith, education, labor and business groups working together to pass New York legislation to ensure undocumented students have equal access to financial assistance for higher education so that they can pursue their dreams.

Today I would like to focus on the national context for New York State DREAM legislation, and the vital role that New York must play to ensure justice and fairness to this nation's undocumented youth.

We are here today because Washington has failed. The Development Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act, which would offer undocumented youth a path to citizenship, was first introduced in 2001. For over a decade, immigration reform and DREAM legislation has been stalled in Congress. On both sides of the aisle, members of Congress have acknowledged the undeniable fact that our national immigration system is broken. As a result of Washington's inaction, millions of undocumented families and students have been left in limbo. Undocumented youth, many of whom have been in this country since they were one or two years old, have no path to citizenship, no access to student loans or state financial assistance to attend higher education, no work authorization, and no access to drivers' licenses and other identity documents. Moreover, DREAMers face daily discrimination because of their immigration status and live in constant fear of being detained and deported to a land that is no longer, and maybe never was, their home. In many cases, DREAMers do not even speak the language of the country where they might be deported.

Washington has failed these children, and they must act immediately to address the systemic failures of our immigration system. But New York State should not wait another month, year or decade for Congress to do its job. There are concrete measures that New York State can and should take to do the right thing for our undocumented youth.

States across the nation, including New York, have already taken action to support DREAM youth. New York is among 13 states nationwide that have passed legislation allowing undocumented immigrants who live in their state to pay the lower in-state tuition rate for state colleges and universities. This is an important first step, but it is not enough. Because of the barriers to employment faced by DREAMers and because they are ineligible to take out student loans, even paying for in-state tuition is an insurmountable challenge for undocumented youth. Many of them can only afford to take one or two classes a semester, which means that it may take them 10 or 12 years to finish a four-year degree. Meanwhile, their talents and youth are needlessly squandered.

Beyond, in-state tuition, four states: Texas, New Mexico, California and Illinois have gone further and passed state-level DREAM legislation to extend state financial assistance for higher education to undocumented students. In 2001, Texas opened up its state tuition assistance program to DREAMers. For over a decade, Texas has been successfully implementing this program. New Mexico opened its tuition assistance program to DREAMers in 2005. And California passed similar legislation last year. And research from the experiences of Texas and New Mexico demonstrates that this is a cost-effective policy that is also economically smart. In the fall of 2009 in Texas, DREAMers represented only 1 percent of students accessing their tuition assistance program. This is a tiny investment in the future of DREAMers and the state. Current research on New York's program indicates that the percentage would be comparably small. More importantly, a recent study by the Fiscal Policy Institute found that New Yorkers with a bachelor's degree earn \$25,000 more a year than workers with high school degrees – this is income that is reinvested in the economy and contributes to the state's economic growth.

Opening up access to state financial assistance is economically sound policy; but more importantly, it is the right thing to do. If Texas, New Mexico and California can support their DREAM youth with state tuition assistance, so should New York. Texas has been supporting its DREAM youth since 2001 – New York has some catching up to do. DREAMers' lives cannot continue to wait.

But passing New York State DREAM legislation has another important purpose – by becoming the fourth state in the nation to pass state-level DREAM legislation, New York would be sending a strong message to Washington that they must act now to fix our broken immigration system.

It is crucial that we pass New York State DREAM legislation this session. We cannot afford to have talented young students miss one more year of education, putting their dreams on hold. We urge Governor Cuomo to include extending access to the tuition assistance program to DREAMers in his budget before the end of the week. We also urge the Assembly and Senate to pass other legislation that helps DREAMers attend college, such as creating a DREAM Fund and opening up access to college savings accounts to DREAMers and their families.

The time for New York to act is now. DREAMers here in New York and across the nation are counting on us to make sure their dreams don't have to wait any longer.

Yohan Garcia

Good Afternoon

City Council Members

Distinguished Guests and Fellow Panelist

My name is Yohan Garcia and I would like to thank you for allowing me to express my strong support for the New York Dream Act. I am Dreamer. I am also proud to serve as a Student Investment Ambassador with City University of New York's Ernesto Malave Leadership Academy. CUNY has been instrumental in supporting my academic success, and I am honored to speak up in support of my fellow CUNY students who are also dreamers. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Chancellor Goldstein and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Sanchez for their leadership supporting the New York Dream Act.

I emigrated from Puebla, Mexico, 9 years ago, in pursuit of the American dream. The U.S. to me represented diversity, success, and education. These were all things I lacked in my native country. In Mexico, I was unable finish high school because of my family's economic hardships. I had to work to help cover my family's basic needs. However, I was always longing for greater opportunities and I knew that I could accomplish anything I set my mind to.

Once I arrived in the U.S, I secured my first job as a dishwasher in a diner. At first I became disillusioned and lost sight of my goal of becoming an educated person. I had to face many obstacles in my way. Thankfully, my family never lost faith in me. My brother quickly enrolled me in English classes. He also reminded me that I had made this journey to accomplish my dream of becoming a successful professional, and that I had the potential to conquer my goals. Although, I still work in the restaurant business, I will continue to pursue my dream of becoming a U.S. Senator. I know that being undocumented has made achieving my goals more challenging and that like many immigrants I am forced to live in the shadows. We lack opportunities and are required to deal with what we have. Yet life is not supposed to be that way, we should not be forced to live this way. We must not let our current circumstances determine our future. We have the power to change them!!

I am determined to succeed; in these 9 years, I have completed two years of English classes at the New York Language Center. I recently earned my Associates Degree in Business Administration from the Borough of Manhattan Community College with a concentration on Travel and Tourism. While attending BMCC, I was an active student leader and served as the President of the Travel and Tourism Club and as a Student Government Senator. I have also sought out opportunities in public service, and have interned in the Mayor's Office of Adult Education, the New York City Council with Councilman Rodriguez office, and most recently with U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. Moreover, I have the pleasure of also being a member of the advocacy committee at the New York State Youth leadership Council where we are strongly urging the passage of the New York Dream Act.

My academic and professional career does not stop there! As part of the DREAM Fellowship, I had the opportunity to intern at one of the New York Immigration Coalition's member organizations - the New York Civic Participation Project (NYCPP). This organization has provided me with opportunities to work for the community and advocate on behalf of Dreamers. For example, a few weeks ago I went to a meeting in Long Island, where I made a presentation on the New York DREAM legislation. At the end of my presentation, people seemed to be so excited, and motivated, and I realized that people do care about what happens around them, and all they need is someone to motivate them to act.

Thanks to the Leadership training at the New York Immigration Coalition, I further developed my advocacy skills. I will use this newly gained experience to become a successful student leader at Hunter College. Upon my completion of my BA, I plan to attend Harvard to become a Human Rights Lawyer. I will continue to pursue my dream of becoming a U.S. Senator. I am a Dreamer. Perhaps I don't have everything I wish I had right now, but I have hope, courage, and motivation to follow my dreams. In conclusion, I request the New York City Council to urge the state legislature and the Governor to support and pass the New York Dream Act. A bill that will allow many undocumented youth, like myself, to further our education and continue with the pursuit of our dreams.

**Testimony of Christina Chang
MinKwon Center for Community Action**

**Before the New York City Council
Committee on Immigration
Regarding DREAM Legislation**

March 20, 2012

Good afternoon, my name is Christina Chang and on behalf of the MinKwon Center for Community Action, I would like to thank the Committee on Immigration, Committee Chair Dromm and Speaker Quinn for holding this hearing. The MinKwon Center is a grassroots organization serving the needs and concerns of the Korean American community through our five program areas: Community Organizing and Advocacy, Social Services, Civic Participation, Youth Empowerment, and Culture.

Passage of DREAM legislation, and in particular the DREAM Act, is of great importance to the Asian American community -- the fastest growing population in New York City. Youth in our community are severely disadvantaged facing serious language barriers and one of the highest risks of dropping out of high school (27%). Many immigrant parents usually work long shifts to support their families and are not able to participate in their children's education. Many of our youth are counted among the one out of seven Korean Americans who are undocumented in New York City. For undocumented youth in our community, the final insurmountable obstacle in attaining higher education is most often the inability to access public financial assistance.

We should be investing in the dreams of students like Emily Park, a DREAMer and a Neuroscience major at Queens College, who wants to pursue medicine. For Emily, passage of the DREAM legislation is not only about greater access to financial aid, but a recognition that she too has the right to higher education; that she is a "good enough American kid." Smart and hard-working students like Emily should not feel as if they need to live in the shadows. Our undocumented youth, our children, should be told that they are indeed worthy and have the right to pursue their dreams.

The MinKwon Center has taken this message to our community and our community has responded with overwhelming support. Through street and church outreach, we have here over 1,300 petitions signed by Korean community members urging the State legislature and Governor Cuomo to pass DREAM legislation. We now call on the City Council to take action and represent our community not only by passing the resolutions under consideration, but by urging Governor Cuomo to ensure that the DREAM Act is included in his executive budget. Thank you for your time and your attention.

Cabrini Immigrant Services Statement to NY City Council March 20, 2012

Good afternoon. My name is Sr. Kelly Carpenter, I am the Director of Cabrini Immigrant Services on Henry Street. When I think about Dream Act Legislation I think about that day, December 18, 2010, the day our United States Senate failed to support our youth, our communities and our future. That morning, Cabrini Immigrant Services was hosting a Christmas party for almost 100 community members. That day began with such joy, happiness and anticipation but ended in tears. It was devastating for us – even more devastating was to hear elected officials call the proposal “not a dream act but a nightmare act”.

Despite this setback, Cabrini Immigrant Services and the youth and community members with whom we collaborate rallied. We rallied because we know that Dream Act legislation will pass because it must pass. We are counting on New York State to lead the way. We believe and trust in New York State’s longtime tradition of justice, inclusion and opportunity for all. We believe and trust that elected representatives throughout New York State grasp the reality that is before them - the reality that many people born outside the United States are fully integrated members of our communities. Many are already U.S. citizens, many more are future citizens.

Cabrini Immigrant Services has been in the Lower East Side since 1999. We have seen many of these Dreamers grow up. These young people are not nightmares – they are beautiful, intelligent and gifted. They are Americans and they want, need and deserve the opportunity to pursue their dreams of higher education and become contributing members

of the communities to which they belong. Passing Dream Act legislation will only add 2% to the cost of the Tuition Assistance Program but it will result in much greater economic benefits for the State of New York as our youth with college degrees join the labor force and attract higher paying jobs. I am grateful for this opportunity to speak to you today. Dream Act legislation will pass because it must pass and our communities are counting on New York State to lead the way. I respectfully request City Council Members to support the two resolutions before you today and urge Governor Cuomo to take the right path and the only path for the future of our state and our economy by making it possible for New York State Dreamers to pursue higher education. Thank you.

KNOWLEDGE THE
LEADERSHIP ■ BLACK
COMMUNITY ■ INSTITUTE

www.TheBlackInstitute.org

New York City Council's
Committees on
Immigration and Higher Education
Joint Hearing on the DREAM Act & DREAM Fund
March 20, 2012

My name is Janet and I am a member of The Black Institute. I migrated with my family of five in 2001. My mother's primary reason for coming to America was because of my younger sister, who has a severe hearing disability. After many failed attempts in Jamaica to educate her, my family realized that after high school, her options would be limited. My mother jumped at the opportunity to teach in the United States where she knew my sister's options would be far better.

At the time, I was a budding teen of 16 years; like any teenager my expectations for my future varied and were not holistic. I knew, however, that I wanted go to a four college and then eventually to law school, as this was my dream since the 4th grade. I dreamt that I would graduate at the top of my class and receive a scholarship to attend an Ivy League university preferable, Yale Law. Although it was a hectic transition and a rough year, I began my education at Samuel Tilden High School in Brooklyn. I graduated at the top of my class and moved on John Jay College for Criminal Justice, where years later I transferred to School of Professional Studies at CUNY to finish my undergraduate degree. I'm expected to graduate in 2013. It has taken me more ten years to complete my first degree because I was unable to consistently afford school. This has ruined my self-esteem and confidence but God has carried me through.

When I entered the United States, I received a J-2 visa which expired in 2003, as did my older sister's. My younger siblings were able to participate in the H1-B program with my mother as they were under 20 years of age. The permanent residency process has taken very long and as a result both of my younger siblings are currently out of status. I will be 29 in December, my older sister will be 30, my younger sister will be 26 and my brother will soon be 23 years of age. Tears come to eyes when I think of what my family has endured, especially my mom. With the help of the lord, she has provided for four children for eleven years without the help of another. She has watched her children suffer through rejection simply because of their immigration status.

Many nights I hear her crying out to the Lord wonder if accepting the teaching position in the States was the correct decision. Here she is nurturing other peoples' children when her own children are unable to finish college or even work. She is emotionally depleted.

The hardest thing for me is convincing myself that my dreams will come true. I worked over 20 different jobs "off the books," where I was abused and mistreated. I am frustrated and emotionally hesitant about what my future holds. Although I am uncertain about my future, I am very worried about my youngest brother. Being a young man who is unable to work, he has become so mentally frustrated he's retreated to his bedroom. He speaks to no one in the family and he barely eats. My family is beginning to worry for his safety. As for my younger sister who is deaf, she keeps asking when she will be able to travel with her friends, go to school and finally work. We still have not figured out what to say to her.

I come before you today to ask who will compensate us for our time, the years lost, the opportunities missed? I asked that members of the City Council to demand the passage of the Dream Act. How many of us must sacrifice our *dreams* for the sake of politics and prejudice?



South Asian Youth Action

54-05 Seabury Street, Elmhurst, NY 11373 * Tel: (718) 651-3484 * www.saya.org *

DREAM Act Hearing

Remarks by Udai Tambar, Executive Director, South Asian Youth Action (SAYA!)

March 20, 2012

On behalf of the youth, staff and board of South Asian Youth Action (SAYA!), I want to thank Council Member Daniel Dromm, Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, and the rest of the City Council for the opportunity to speak today.

As background, SAYA! provides comprehensive youth development programs for low-income South Asian youth in New York City. Through academic, leadership, sports, arts, and counseling programs, SAYA! presents youth with the possibility to expand their horizons and realize their dreams. In our 15 year history, SAYA! has opened the door to over 7,700 youth who are often the first in their families to attend high school and pursue college in the U.S. Although many of our youth represent South Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Guyana, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Trinidad, we also serve youth from African-American, Asian, Latino and other racial and ethnic backgrounds.

SAYA! supports New York City Council Res 0803-2011 and Res 1219-2012, which call on state legislators and Governor Cuomo to immediately pass the NYS DREAM Act (S04179/A06829) and DREAM Fund (A08689). Many of our youth are undocumented or face immigration challenges. Despite being raised in this country, our youth who are qualified to attend college unfortunately may not be eligible for financial aid to attend college. These youth and their families are hard working members of our community and deserve the chance to succeed.

The purpose of the DREAM Act is to help individuals who meet certain requirements, have an opportunity to enlist in the military or go to college and have a path to citizenship which they otherwise would not have without this legislation. At SAYA!, we serve bright, hardworking youth every day who, through no fault of their own, are prevented from following their dreams because of their immigration status. As an organization serving immigrant youth, we believe the DREAM Act is important to New York City and the United States. With access to an education, they will have an opportunity to contribute to society and become the next generation of successful immigrants.

For example, Raju is a SAYA! youth who happens to also be an undocumented immigrant. He graduated from high school in Queens and attends college in the borough as well. He aspires to get a better paying job than his immigrant parents have. Unfortunately, he is unable to access any financial aid and works off the books because he can't get a job legally. His below minimum-wage job doesn't cover his college costs and the hours don't accommodate his classes. He is burning out and we risk him dropping out of college. Raju is not alone – there are many stories like his that the passage of the DREAM Act and DREAM fund can help create a happy ending for.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Contact information for Udai Tambar, Executive Director, South Asian Youth Action (SAYA!):
718.651.3484 or udai@saya.org.

Good Afternoon Everyone,

My name is Ann Marie Schrouter-Gayle and I am an immigrant from Jamaica West Indies. I am the current President of Medgar Evers College Student Government Association, founder and chair for Medgar Evers College United Body of International and Un-Documented Students Club. This club was established as a support system to assist foreign students in a successful transition to campus life as well as introduce them to the many opportunities available in the surrounding community. I am a senior majoring in Applied Management with a concentration in Social Service Administration.

I am standing here articulating my endorsement on behalf of the New York State Dream Act Legislation. Although many thousands of Un-Documented students are given the opportunity to pursue their educational aspirations yet still, they cannot apply for state or federal financial aid under current law. I strongly believe that un-documented students who complete New York state high school should be qualified to receive some form of governmental monetary sustenance. This monetary fuel will help finance these students in the development of their educational requisites.

Today, I am calling upon our New York State Legislature to pass, and I am appealing with Governor Cuomo to please sign, the New York State Dream Act, which will grant certain benefits to eligible undocumented immigrants. This bill will create countless benefits to New York as we are in need of a skilled workforce. I am also summoning the New York State Legislature to pass and Governor Cuomo to please sign legislation establishing the New York DREAM fund commission. This Dream fund will aid in the advancement of the educational opportunities of children of immigrants through scholarship programs for higher education.

I am very devoted and ardent to the problems that affect International and un-documented students and I am eager to send a clear message to Washington D.C that enough is enough. I am content with the actions that New York State has taken to pass this bill in-order to help students realize their dreams through quality educational opportunities that will ultimately help them to enhance them-selves and their family while contributing to the progression of our society.

Thank you.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No.
 in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alden Nesbitt

Address: 2137 Strauss Street

I represent: The Black Institute

Address: 39 Broadway Suite 1540

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mae Lee

Address: 83 Canal Street Room 301 NY NY 10007

I represent: Chinese Progressive Assn.

Address: 83 Canal Street NY NY 10002

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Karla Rosero Kahn

Address: _____

I represent: Emerald Isle Immigration Center

Address: 59-26 Woodside Ave. Woodside,

774 11377

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Carina Bergall Testifying on Behalf
of Manhattan Borough President

Address: _____

I represent: Manhattan Borough President

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yajaira Saavedra

Address: 188 Wadsworth Ave

I represent: DREAM Scholars

Address: 188 Wadsworth Ave Apt #19
New York NY 10033

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 129

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Assemblyman Francisco Moya

Address: 102-11 146th Ave Corona, NY

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: John Moreau

Address: _____

I represent: Latino Youth for Higher Ed.

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CATHERIN ARDILA

Address: _____

I represent: LATINO YOUTH FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (LYHEP)

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ERIKA BRET

Address: _____

I represent: LATINO YOUTH FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (LYHEP)

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Charles Harding

Address: _____

I represent: Cuny Bronx Community College

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 803 Res. No. 1219

in favor in opposition

Date: March 25th 2012

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Annmarie Schrouter Gayle

Address: 4512 Snyder Ave Brooklyn 11203

I represent: Medgar Evers College + USS

Address: 1637 Bedford Ave / CUNY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/01

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Geovanny Lopez

Address: 3 old mamaronck rd white plains NY

I represent: the New York State youth leadership council

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Aida S. Carreón

Address: 101 W 31st St 9th floor NY NY 10001

I represent: CUNY (Citizenship Now)

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 0803

in favor in opposition

Date: March 21, 2012

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yohan Garcia

Address: 490 Morgan Ave Apt 3A Brooklyn NY 11222

I represent: CUNY Malare Leadership Academic

Address: 555 West 57th St Suite 1420B NY, NY 10019

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael Mandel

Address: 825 Third Ave, NY, NY 10022

I represent: American Immigration Lawyers Association - NY Chapter

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 0803

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cristopher Chavez

Address: 2477 Grand Ave. Apt. 3C
Brooklyn NY 11246

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Camille Mackler

Address: 11 Broadway Suite 615, NY, NY 10004

I represent: AKA (American Immigration Lawyers Ass'n)

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ayesha Mahmooda

Address: 72-18 Roosevelt Avenue 2nd floor

I represent: Desis Rising Up & Moving (DRUM)

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/26/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Leonel Brant

Address: 2431 Morris ave

I represent: Vamos Unidos

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Arline Herrera

Address: 917 East 169 Bronx, NY 10450

I represent: Self

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alejandro Mohr

Address: _____

I represent: City University of New York

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/11

Name: Rocio Cruz (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 210 Sherman Ave Suite A NY NY

I represent: Assembly member Guillermo Lirio

Address: 210 Sherman Ave Suite A NY NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 1219

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/28/2012

Name: SUMANI PAGHUNATHAN (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 82 WALL STREET SUITE 200

I represent: PROGRESSIVE STATES NETWORK

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/12

Name: KATHERINE TABARAS (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 75 W 4th St

I represent: MAKE THE ROADS A NEW YORK

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: KASSANDRA GUZMAN

Address: ~~_____~~

I represent: MAKE THE ROAD NEW YORK

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 803

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ENMA Mehmedovic

Address: 25 W/18th

I represent: 32B+

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christina Chang

Address: _____

I represent: Minkwon Center for Community Action

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jong-Min You

Address: _____

I represent: myself

Address: Brooklyn, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 1219/803

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JACQUELINE VINTO

Address: 361 OCEAN AVE # D3 BROOKLYN, NY 11226

I represent: THE NEW YORK IMMIGRATION (OFFICE)

Address: 137-9 W. 25th St, 12th Fl NY NY 10001

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Omar Murray

Address: 2761 University Ave Bx ny 10468

I represent: Cuny Bmcc

Address: 199 Chambers Street

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3-20-12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sneha Gaud

Address: 54-05 Seabury St. Elmhurst, NY

I represent: SAYAI

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nataly Lopez

Address: _____

I represent: Myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No.

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/2012

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael Fabricant

Address: _____

I represent: Professional Staff Congress - UNY

Address: 41 Broadway, Ste 1500

NYC 1006
Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3-20-12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: SR. Kelly Carpenter

Address: _____

I represent: Cabrini Immigrant Services

Address: 139 Henry St.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 03/20/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JOHN NIMANDJA

Address: 108 JEROME ST.

I represent: BMCC NYPIRG

Address: 199 Chambers St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 803 Res. No. 1219

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/2012

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jessica Orozco

Address: 55 Exchange PL NY 10005

I represent: Hispanic Federation

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cordell Cleare

Address: 163 west 125th Street

I represent: Senator Bill Perkins'

Address: 163 W. 125th St.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 803 Res. No. 1219

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Russell Lum

Address: 475 East 120th St NY NY 10029

I represent: Little Sisters of the Assumption

Address: same

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Behnam Li

Address: 99 Hudson St, 12th Fl, NY NY 10013

I represent: AALDEF - Asian American Leg. Def. Fund

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/20/2012

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Myung Keun (Tony) Choi

Address: 11 Marshall Ave #3 Little Ferry NJ 07643-1022

I represent: ALDEF

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Roxon Weir

Address: 716 Cleveland St Brooklyn NY 11208

I represent: ~~NY~~ NYS YLC

Address: 339 Lafayette St Suite 304 NY 10012

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Janet Yates

Address: _____

I represent: The Black Institute

Address: 39 Broadway Suite 1540

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms