



# New York State DREAM Coalition

For Immediate Release -- May 21st

Contact: Anayeli Gomez, NYDA Coalition Coordinator – [agomez@seiu32bj.org](mailto:agomez@seiu32bj.org)

Christina Baal 917.359.8531 [cbaal@seiu32bj.org](mailto:cbaal@seiu32bj.org)

## NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY PASSES DREAM ACT

### NY DREAM COALITION PUSHES SENATE TO JOIN ASSEMBLY AND PASS THE NY DREAM ACT THIS SESSION

**ALBANY, NY** — Today the bill graduates from the Assembly and now stands before the senate. With only days left in the legislative session, the New York State DREAM Coalition and legislators came together to celebrate the passing of A2597 through the Assembly but more importantly to call on the Senate to pass S2378 this session. Students, advocates, union members, and faith leaders carried photos of the faces of undocumented students from around the state who need the NYS Dream Act to pass in order to complete their education.

“By passing the New York State DREAM Act, the Assembly establishes its respect for our immigrant communities and recognizes the potential in all our students, no matter where they were born,” **said Assemblymember Francisco Moya**. “With this bill, we take the first step in putting higher education within reach of anyone willing to strive for it. I look forward to seeing the Senate follow suit in the coming days.”

“New York's immigrant population has always been critical to our social, economic, and cultural fabric,” **said Senate Minority Leader Andrea Stuart-Cousins**. “Students of good character who, through no fault of their own have resided here for years, deserve an opportunity to achieve and contribute to the American dream. To cut their educational opportunities off deprives us all.”

This piece of legislation works to mitigate higher education costs for undocumented students. It opens up the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) to undocumented students, creates a state level DREAM fund, and allows parents and students to open tuition savings accounts with a tax identification number. TAP is one of the nations largest need-based, in-state grant programs available to students who need it most. This bill would not impact any students who are currently or will be eligible for TAP – it only seeks to further promote access to higher education to New York’s undocumented youth.

“Today is a proud and important day for the Empire State, and a critical step forward for the thousands of hardworking DREAMeers who have done everything we could ask of them,” **said Senator Jose Peralta**. “But we cannot afford for this to be the last step in the right direction; we must pass the DREAM Act in the New York State Senate and we must see it signed into law this year. We call on every New Yorker who believes in equality who thinks hard work should be rewarded, who wants to see New York continue to thrive in this young century to lend your voice to this fight.”

In 2001, Governor Pataki, with bi-partisan support, granted undocumented students access to in-state tuition rates. Passing the New York DREAM Act will demonstrate that New York State remains a leader on important issues and will reinforce that New York is a state of fairness and equal opportunity.

Right now, many states across the country are passing tuition equity laws and state-level DREAM legislation that recognize the importance of continuing to invest in our youth beyond K-12 and into higher education. California, New Mexico, and Texas already grant undocumented students access to their tuition assistance programs.

#### Steering Committee:

Chinese Progressive Association  
DREAM Scholars  
DRM Capitol Group  
Hispanic Federation  
Make the Road New York  
MinKwon Center for Community Action  
New York Immigration Coalition  
New York State Youth Leadership Council  
NYPIRG  
NYS Interfaith Network for Immigration Reform  
Professional Staff Congress - PSC CUNY

#### Members:

1199 SEIU  
African Hope Committee  
American Jewish Committee (AJC)  
Anti-Defamation League  
Brooklyn College DREAM Team  
Cabrini Immigrant Services  
Good Shepherd Services  
Immigrant Movement International  
La Fuente  
La Union  
Lehman DREAM Team  
Little Sisters of the Assumption  
Long Island Jobs with Justice  
Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition  
NYC Labor Council for Latin American Advancement - NYC LCLAA  
NYS Higher Education PAC  
New York State Immigrant Action Fund  
NYU DREAM Team  
Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary  
Sauti Yetu Center for African Women SEIU 32BJ  
Students for Education Reform  
The Black Institute  
The Fund for Public Advocacy  
United Federation of Teachers  
United NY

“From an economical perspective students that have graduated from college contribute more to the economy than students that do not graduate college, this will prove as a huge revenue to the state. From a moral perspective education should not be a privilege but rather a basic right that everyone should have access to regardless of a status. It is not fair to deter the dreams of many brilliant students who cannot afford to pay the high tuition prices because they do not have a nine digit number. The NYS DREAM Act has worked for other states that have implemented it, for example Texas who introduced their own DREAM Act about 12 years ago. NY needs to take leadership in this issue, many of these undocumented students consider NY their home and only want to contribute to make this state better,” said **Luba Cortes, DREAMers and Long Island leader of Make the Road NY.**

"I'm here as a union member and mother of 2 college aged sons. I was fortunate enough to be able to access all the resources I needed to send my sons to college but I know that's not the case for too many immigrant parents. Education is not just about making sure kids get a good job and make money, it's about making sure that the next generation have the tools they need to make this country the best it can be, " said **Monica Cruz, member of SEIU Local 32BJ.** "New York State Senate, it's time to pass the NY State Dream Act."

"Today we are a step closer to making sure that NY lives up its name as a state that intends to make progress in the 21st century. As the largest undocumented youth-led organization in New York, our members are relying on the NY DREAM Act as the very vehicle which will allow them to attend college and develop careers that will permanently improve the economic and social landscape of New York State," said **Razeen Zaman, Campaign Organizer at the New York State Youth Leadership Council.**

"The Assembly did the right and smart thing by passing the New York DREAM Act," said **Chung-Wha Hong, executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition.** "Now it's the Senate's turn, and our message for Senators Klein and Skelos is clear: don't obstruct young people's DREAMs. Don't squander this opportunity. Pass the New York DREAM Act now."

State-level DREAM legislation enjoys wide-spread support in New York: SUNY and CUNY Boards of Trustees and Chancellors; NYS Board of Regents; former SUNY Board of Trustees Chair Carl Hayden; New York State United Teachers; Professional Staff Congress; United University Professors, United University Senate; New York City Council; New York City Mayor Bloomberg; college presidents from NYU, Fordham, Manhattanville, and Sarah Lawrence; and dozens of legislators are among those who endorse this legislation.

"We commend the Assembly for doing the right thing and passing the Dream Act, and we call on the Senate to follow suit, so all qualified New York young people, regardless of immigration status, can have access to state funded college tuition assistance and afford the education they need to develop their talents and follow their dreams," said **Dr. Diane Steinman, Director of the NYS Interfaith Network for Immigration Reform.** "Lawmakers have a moral obligation not to prevent young people who were brought here as children and never chose to break the law from realizing their potential and contributing to the economic vitality of our state. Their future, and New York's economic future, are at stake."

###