

PRESS STATEMENT

CONTACT: Jose Davila, 917-502-6486
jdavila@hispanicfederation.org

AS THE STATE'S LATINO LEADERSHIP BEGINS THE ANNUAL SOMOS CONFERENCE IN ALBANY, OVER 50 LATINO LEADERS ISSUE JOINT LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR & LEGISLATIVE LEADERS CALLING FOR INCLUSION OF THE NYS DREAM ACT IN THE FINAL BUDGET

*LONG LIST OF LEADERS INCLUDES NYC COUNCIL SPEAKER MELISSA MARK-VIVERITO, UFT
PRESIDENT MICHAEL MULGREW, 32BJ SEIU PRESIDENT HECTOR FIGUEROA, NYC CENTRAL LABOR
COUNCIL PRESIDENT VINCENT ALVAREZ AND HISPANIC FEDERATION PRESIDENT JOSE CALDERON*

March 20, 2015 (Albany, NY) – The below letter was issued to Governor Andrew Cuomo, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, and Senate Leaders Dean Skelos and Jeffrey Klein calling for the inclusion of the NYS DREAM Act in the final Fiscal Year 2016 State Budget. Over fifty community, labor and government leaders representing the state's Latino community have signed the below letter. As thousands gather in Albany this weekend for the 28th Annual Somos Spring Conference, our community stands united in urging the Governor and Legislature to come together on this important budget priority.

March 19, 2015

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Assembly Speaker
Legislative Office Building 932
Albany, NY 12248

Honorable Dean Skelos
Senate Majority Leader
Legislative Office Building 909
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable Jeffrey Klein
Senate Co-Leader
Legislative Office Building 913
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Governor Cuomo, Speaker Heastie, Leader Skelos and Leader Klein:

Hispanic Federation and the undersigned Latino leaders in New York State are writing to urge you to ensure that the NY DREAM Act remains in the FY '16 budget. We are counting on your leadership to guide New York in the right direction and help lift barriers to college for thousands of undocumented students, giving undocumented youth access to NY State financial aid programs, including grants, and scholarships.

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We have signed onto this letter to highlight the power of NY's unified immigrant community – documented and undocumented. In 2011, immigrants contributed more than \$200 billion to New York State's economy. Passing the NY DREAM Act will not only provide educational equity and opportunities for all of our immigrant students, it will allow New York to reap the benefits of a better educated workforce and increased economic productivity.

New York must forge a path that honors its history and the contributions immigrants have made to its economy, culture and quality of life. California, Minnesota, New Mexico, Texas, and Washington have all have passed legislation that allows for undocumented students to apply for state-based financial aid. It is time for New York to join the list of states that are taking this important step toward educational equity.

We call on you, Governor Cuomo and leaders of the New York State Legislature, to keep the NY DREAM Act in the FY'16 budget and give undocumented students the opportunity that other generations of immigrants have been granted: to work hard, achieve and fully contribute to our society.

The closest and best chance that we have to make the NY DREAM Act a reality is now in your hands. Please do the right thing and keep it in the budget.

Sincerely,

Héctor Figueroa
President
32BJ SEIU-Service Employees International Union

Raul Russi
Chief Executive Officer
Acacia Network

Mark Anthony Gonzalez Ed.D.
Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer
ASPIRA of New York

Santos Rivera Jr. DSW
Chief Executive Officer
Betances Health Center

Ladan Alomar
Executive Director
Centro Civico

Denise Rosario, ACSW
Executive Director
Coalition for Hispanic Family Services

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Soledad Hiciano
Executive Director
Community Association of Progressive Dominicans (ACDP)

Dr. Rosa M. Gil
President & Chief Executive Officer
Comunilife

Maria Elisa Cuadra-Fernandez, LCSW-R, ACSW, CASAC, CPP ICADC
Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer
Community Organization for Parents and Youth

Monica Sibri
Chair and Founder
CUNY DREAMers

Luis Garden Acosta
Founder & President
El Puente

Frances Lucerna
Co-Founder & Executive Director
El Puente

Eugenio Maldonado
Co-Founder & Chief of Operations
El Puente

Jennifer Pliego
Deputy Director
El Taller Latino

Rabbi Michael E. Feinberg
Executive Director
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition

Heriberto Sanchez Soto
Executive Director
Hispanic AIDS Forum

Jose Calderon
President
Hispanic Federation

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Zoe Colon, MPA
Executive Director
Hispanic Resource Center

Nedda deCastro
Principal
International High School at Prospect Heights

Luis Duany
Director of School Support
Internationals Network for Public Schools

Liliana Vargas
Director of New School Development
Internationals Network for Public Schools

Lucia Gomez
Executive Director
La Fuente

Guillermo Chacon
President
Latino Commission on AIDS

Juan Cartagena
President & General Counsel
LatinoJustice PRLDEF

Jose Perez
Deputy General Counsel & Litigation Director
LatinoJustice PRLDEF

Osman Canales
President and Founder
Long Island Immigrant Student Advocates

Victoria Daza
Organizer
Long Island Jobs with Justice

Javier H. Valdés
Co-Executive Director
Make the Road New York

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Stephen J. Stritch III
Executive Director
Mercy Center

Jessica González-Rojas
Executive Director
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health

Vincent Alvarez
President
New York City Central Labor Council

Ernesto Loperena
Executive Director
New York Council on Adoptable Children

Manuel Castro
Immigration Campaign Coordinator
New York Immigration Coalition

Angela Fernandez, Esq.
Executive Director
Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights

Sonia Ivany
President Emeritus
NYC - Labor Council for Latin American Advancement

Honorable Melissa Mark-Viverito
Speaker
NYC Council

Honorable Rafael Espinal
NYC Council

Honorable Mark Levine
NYC Council

Honorable Rosie Mendez
Co-Chair of the Black, Latino and Asian Caucus
NYC Council

Honorable Annabel Palma
NYC Council

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Honorable Antonio Reynoso
NYC Council

Honorable Ydanis Rodriguez
NYC Council

Iris DeLutro
Vice President for Cross-Campus Units
Professional Staff Congress/CUNY

Carlos J. Garcia
Secretary Treasurer
Public Employees Federation

Yolanda Alicea-Winn, LCSWR
Vice President
Puerto Rican Family Institute

Robert Federico
Executive Producer
Repertorio Español

Dr. Manuel A. Morán
Chief Executive Officer & Artistic Director
Society of the Educational Arts

Lisette Sosa-Dickson, LCSW
Executive Director
Spanish Speaking Elderly Council – RAICES

Joyce A. Rivera
Founder & Executive Director
St. Ann's Corner of Harm Reduction

Stanley Delacruz
President
SUNY DREAMers

Grace Bonilla, Esq.
President & Chief Executive Officer
The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

Samuel Cruz, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Religion and Society
Union Theological Seminary City of New York

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Michael Mulgrew
President
United Federation of Teachers

Evelyn DeJesus
Vice President for Education
United Federation of Teachers

Paloma Hernandez M.S., M.P.H.
President and Chief Executive Officer
Urban Health Plan

Cecilia Gastón
Executive Director
Violence Intervention Program

Graciela Heymann
Executive Director
Westchester Hispanic Coalition

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