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March 6, 2012

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of the State of New York  
Executive Chamber  
New York State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Re: The New York State DREAM Act

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We write today to ask you to include the New York State DREAM Act in your Executive Budget.

We fully understand that attention is focused on the economy, thus it is prudent to mention the positive effects the NYS DREAM Act will have on New York's economy. Providing undocumented immigrant youth with access to financial assistance will help encourage and support their achievement of higher education. The positive effects of receiving higher education have been well documented. "By fostering environments that are intellectually stimulating and diverse, colleges and universities fuel the creation of new technologies and ideas, and help build a skilled workforce".<sup>1</sup> The DREAM Act gives us an opportunity to educate the next leaders in science, technology, industry, business, academia, and more. We have one of the nation's premier public higher education systems, and we should be providing all New Yorkers with the same access, assistance and opportunity to get a quality education.

According to the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy, undocumented immigrants paid over \$662 million in taxes to New York State in 2010, making it the state with the fourth highest revenue in taxes from undocumented immigrants. They paid approximately; \$104.4 million in personal income taxes, \$95 million in property taxes, and over \$463 million in sales taxes.<sup>2</sup> It is unjust and unfair to collect well over a half a billion dollars in tax revenue from

<sup>1</sup> Office of the State Comptroller: New York State. *The Economic Impact of Higher Education in New York State*. Albany: Report 7-2011, September 2011. Print

<sup>2</sup> American Immigration Council: Immigration Policy Center. *Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes. Too*. 18 April 2011. Obtained on March 2, 2012 from < <http://immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/unauthorized-immigrants-pay-taxes-too>>.

undocumented immigrants only to deny them financial support that is granted to other New Yorkers.

Clearly there are academic and economic benefits to the NYS DREAM Act, but additionally, there is a moral imperative rooted in the Act. We are a nation that welcomes, not a nation that rejects or denies the freedoms and opportunities which the Statute of Liberty represents. New York State has benefited from having one of the largest and most diverse immigrant populations and has been on the forefront of progressive immigration policies. We, therefore, must not abandon or ignore this rich history, but instead push back on the tide of national and local anti-immigrant sentiments and policies. In this ever expanding globalized economy we must do all that we can to cultivate the intellectual capital residing in New York State by providing these youths, also known as the Dreamers, with financial assistance towards higher education and the opportunity to fulfill the American Dream

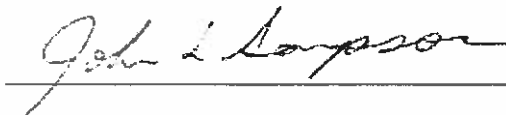
In your State of the State you promised to be the lobbyist for the students. Here is an opportunity to make good on that promise. There are thousands of undocumented youth in New York State yearning to go to college, but are lacking the financial resources to do so. As you are aware, the State Education Department has estimated that the cost of providing financial assistance to undocumented immigrants to be a mere \$627,428, which amounts to less than 1% of TAP. Moreover, Richard J. Trautwein, Deputy Commissioner for legal affairs for the state's Education Department, has stated that, "the cost will be offset, at least in part, by increased income tax revenues 'generated by affording this population the opportunity to complete college and obtain higher-paying jobs,' as well as the decline in the amount of money the state would spend in public assistance for these students".<sup>3</sup> The costs associated with providing financial assistance to undocumented youth will have far-reaching and long-lasting positive effects in New York State and the nation.

In this ever expanding globalized economy we must do all that we can to cultivate the intellectual capital residing in New York State by providing these youths with financial assistance towards receiving higher education and the opportunity to fulfill the American Dream. Accordingly, we respectfully urge that you help potentially tens of thousands of youth obtain access to higher education by including the NYS DREAM Act in the executive budget.

Respectfully,



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<sup>3</sup> Santos, Fernanda. "State Puts a Precise Cost on Helping Illegal Immigrant Students." New York Times. 8 Dec. 2011. Obtained on March 2, 2012 from <<http://www.nytimes.com/schoolbook/2011/12/08/state-puts-a-precise-cost-on-helping-illegal-immigrant-students/>>.

~~5/12/12~~

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