



NEW YORK STATE SENATE DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

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Senate Majority Passes The José Peralta New York State DREAM Act

(Albany, NY) The Senate Majority Conference today passed the José Peralta New York State DREAM Act ([S.1250](#)). This legislation will allow undocumented children, who are already students in New York State, the ability to qualify for state aid for higher education, create a Dream Fund for college scholarship opportunities and remove barriers that prevent undocumented families from college saving programs. Allowing undocumented youths to access financial assistance will enable them to earn degrees, access highly skilled employment and support their local economies across New York State.

“Today we made it clear that we will continue to stand up for New Yorkers,” **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said. “We made college more affordable, we have made it possible for all teachers to teach without undue burdens, and we passed tax relief for middle class New Yorkers by making the property tax cap permanent.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Luis Sepúlveda said, “I am honored to sponsor the José Peralta New York State DREAM Act. This essential piece of legislation will create new pathways to higher education for our bright undocumented students who form an important part of our American family. Immigrant workers make approximately 17 percent of the overall labor force in the U.S. In our state, that number is much higher. Immigrants are 25 percent of our labor force and add roughly \$100 billion in consumer power to our economy yearly. Immigrant students will now reach even greater heights because of the improved access to a world-class education. Through the Jose Peralta New York State DREAM Act, our shared American dream becomes a reality for thousands of deserving young immigrants.”

Senate Bill [S.1250](#), the José Peralta New York State DREAM Act, will:

- Create a DREAM fund commission and a DREAM fund in order to advance the educational opportunities of the children of immigrants by providing scholarships to college bound students.
- Eliminate potential financial obstacles to obtaining State financial aid and extends the opportunities for undocumented students to attend higher education institutions.
- Eliminate barriers for immigrant aliens to save for their families higher education expenses by allowing such individuals to open a New York State 529 family tuition account under the New York State College Tuition Savings Program and/or be a designated beneficiary on an account if they have a taxpayer identification number.

Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris said, “As a child of immigrants, I know firsthand how the contributions of immigrant families enrich our communities. Passing the DREAM Act commits New York to delivering on the promise of a better life to another generation. The New New York Senate is fighting for our immigrant neighbors and will not deny anyone the opportunity to succeed.”

Senator Jamaal Bailey said, “The rhetoric in Washington surrounding immigration is discriminatory and inherently un-American. In New York State, we understand the value of immigrants and their families. Today, the legislature passed the José Peralta DREAM Act. This bill will allow undocumented students to have access to the same in-state financial aid and scholarship opportunities that are granted to citizens. Education is key for society and instead of placing barriers for our youth; we should ease their academic journey.”

Senator Brian Benjamin said, “Like the rest of our great nation, New York was, and continues to be built by immigrants. To deny our newest neighbors the tools for success is to deny our society its fullest economic, cultural, and social reward. Every New Yorker deserves access to an education.”

Senator Alessandra Biaggi said, “New York was built and made great by immigrants from all over the world. Now, when immigrants are under attack, New York must be a leader in defending them and providing them the opportunity to continue to contribute to our state and our country. The DREAM Act offers hard working youth, the children of immigrants, the same access to education as all other New Yorkers, so they can build their careers, keep New York growing, and fulfill the dreams that brought them to the United States.”

Senator Leroy Comrie said, “Access to higher education is a critical means for economic mobility in New York State, so I cannot understand why we should continue to lock out tens of thousands of children and young adults from the financial resources that they need because of decisions that were made outside of their control. Passing the José Peralta DREAM Act is not just the right thing to do for our immigrant neighbors; it’s the right kind of investment for the future of our state.”

Senator David Carlucci said, “Senator José Peralta was a friend and a colleague. I was proud to cast my vote for the DREAM Act, which he championed. This legislation is about leveling the playing field for all New York high school students seeking higher education. Passing the DREAM Act removes financial barriers to college and will benefit all New Yorkers.”

Senator Andrew Gouardes said, “I am proud to be a co-sponsor and help pass the DREAM Act. This legislation is about fairness and allows children who have grown up in our neighborhoods, been educated in our public schools, and contribute to our economy to be eligible for the same college assistance programs as their classmates, friends, and neighbors. Education is the silver bullet and leveling the playing field is exactly what we’ve been sent to Albany to do.”

Senator Brad Hoylman said, “Dreamers are Americans. They are New Yorkers. And they deserve all the rights and privileges enjoyed by their neighbors, no matter how much Donald Trump and his xenophobic lackeys in Washington wish it weren't so. Today's long overdue passage of the DREAM Act in New York will finally give thousands of deserving New Yorkers access to an affordable college education. I know they will make us proud. I am grateful to be a member of a Democratic majority that works to protect immigrants, and for the leadership of Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Senator Sepúlveda on this critical issue. Now I urge my colleagues in Congress to do everything in their power to give these young men and women a path to citizenship. They have been waiting too long.”

Senator Robert Jackson said, “With the passing of the DREAM Act, we are on our way to making New York State a leader in providing opportunity and solutions for immigrants, particularly undocumented youth. This is so important at a time when these people are among the most targeted by the current federal administration. I'm proud to stand with the immigrant communities of my 31st Senate District and all of New York.”

Senator Anna M. Kaplan said, “Expanding access to higher education is one of the best investments we can make to ensure that young people are prepared to enter today’s workforce. That’s why I’m in favor of the José Peralta New York State DREAM Act, along with legislation increasing the eligibility threshold for TAP, so that more middle class families on Long Island can access these critical resources.”

Senator John Liu said, “With this legislation, we invest in our collective future. We provide access to college education for aspiring students who grew up American but are denied support because of documents they could not be responsible for securing. We empower students to pursue the American Dream and when they achieve it, we will all be better for it.”

Senator Shelley Mayer said, “I am proud to co-sponsor and vote for the DREAM Act. With this bill, we bring higher education within reach for thousands of high school graduates who call New York home and who would otherwise not be able to afford college. Analyses suggest that, over time, the cost of the program will be more than covered by the increased state income taxes that an educated workforce pays into the system. The DREAM Act makes economic sense for our state, and it is the right thing to do for New York’s Dreamers. I am pleased that we are dedicating the bill to our former colleague, the late State Senator José Peralta, who was a tireless advocate for the bill.”

Senator Zellnor Myrie said, “As the son of immigrant parents, I know that immigrants and their children contribute to our communities, our culture, and our economy. They deserve improved access to education, healthcare, and legal representation, no matter their status.”

Senator Kevin Parker said, “Today, with passing of the DREAM Act, my Democratic colleagues and I have provided an open door and the keys to higher education for many children of our great State. This legislation will allow children of immigrants access to the financial support they need to complete their education and advance their future. To the millions of young people who came here as infants and were negatively impacted by the previous college tuition policies, America is their home. As such they deserve the basic rights to an education, police protection and medical services as everyone else. I am so proud of the leadership provided by Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins in making the DREAM Act a reality. Further, it warms my heart that the legislation has now been renamed The Jose Peralta New York State DREAM Act after my colleague who strongly advocated for the its passage prior to his death.”

Senator Roxanne J. Persaud said, “Granting children of immigrants the same access to financial aid available to citizens is fair, and imperative for their chance at higher education. I am proud to pass the José Peralta DREAM Act with my colleagues, in memory of my friend whom it was named after.”

Senator Jessica Ramos said, “Too many of my peers have been unable to fulfill their full potential because the DREAM Act had been stalled in a Republican Senate, but it’s a new day. Our Dreamers are inspirational activists who have advocated for their rights for years and we are lucky to count them as our neighbors. 50 of my neighbors traveled to Albany today to watch their dream come true and I am proud that they can witness a New York legislature that will finally invest in their futures.”

Senator Gustavo Rivera said, “The DREAM Act will give young immigrant New Yorkers - many of whom have grown up in our State and have succeeded in our education system - access to the resources they need to pursue a higher education degree. By finally passing this bill, we will make sure that all New Yorkers, regardless of their immigration status, have access to quality, affordable education that will help them build a brighter future. As the federal government continues to ramp up its attacks against our immigrant communities, we in New York are making sure we acknowledge their invaluable contributions to making our State a better place to live.”

Senator James Sanders Jr. said, “In the area of education, the state is potentially losing thousands of intelligent and motivated members of the workforce by failing to pass the DREAM Act. These students, though undocumented, deserve a chance at success and a path to citizenship. By giving these young people the opportunities they need to succeed, we are helping to build a stronger New York.”

Senator Diane Savino said, “It is extremely difficult to put into words how meaningful this legislation is for this body and to me personally. The José Peralta DREAM Act was the life work of one of my closest and

dearest friends...who I only wish was here in the Chamber to see this come to fruition. With uncertainty from Washington, this legislation is just as important now more than ever, but this issue predates prior to this administration. We owe it to our neighbors and students across the state options to quality education to better this great state”

Senator José Serrano said, “New York's standing as a global center for industry, innovation, and culture is directly linked to its proud history of immigration. Today we have honored that legacy by ensuring that an entire generation of talent will have the opportunity to obtain a higher education and continue making positive contributions to the nation they love. The passing of the José Peralta DREAM Act ensures that every student in our state has a real chance at achieving the American Dream. At a time when the federal government threatens to build walls, we are building bridges to a better life for countless hardworking New Yorkers. Many thanks to the bill sponsor Senator Luis Sepúlveda, and to the late Senator José Peralta who, for years, championed this important legislation.”

Senator Toby Ann Stavisky said, “Six years ago I signed a pledge to support the José Peralta DREAM Act. Today that pledge becomes a reality for thousands of immigrant students. These students will be given an opportunity to advance their academic careers and the people of New York will benefit from their contributions, both economically and culturally. Immigrants with college degrees will get better-paying jobs, give back to the community, and pay taxes. Everybody wins.”

Senator Kevin Thomas said, “The passage of the DREAM Act is an important step in making sure that college is affordable for students who immigrated here as children. Achieving the American Dream is reliant on access to an affordable education, and I am proud to stand with these young men and women who have known no other home as they strive to create a better life for themselves, and help to build a more prosperous New York.”

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