

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

JOINT COMMITTEES ON IMMIGRATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

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September 22, 2010

Start: 10:50 am

Recess: 1:04 pm

HELD AT: Committee Room  
250 Broadway, 14th Floor

B E F O R E:  
YDANIS A. RODRIGUEZ AND  
DANIEL DROMM  
Chairpersons

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Gail Brewer  
Fernando Cabrera  
Larry B. Seabrook  
Juamaane Williams  
Mathieu Eugene

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Scott Stringer  
President  
Manhattan Borough

Eduardo Martine  
Vice Chancellor  
Community Colleges at CUNY

Jillian Beckford  
Counsel

Allan Warnick  
Director  
CUNY's Citizenship Now!

Jennifer Rabb  
President  
Hunter College

Walter Barrios  
CUNY student

Brian Brown  
Assistant Vice President for Government Relations  
St. John's University

Leslie Messiah  
Assistant Vice President for Government Relations and  
State Affairs  
Fordham University

Christine Shakespeare  
Assistant Provost for Student Success  
Pace University

Ms. De Soto  
Professional Staff Congress

Raisa Fideli  
Student

Sylvia Gonzalez  
New York Immigration Coalition

Amy Traub  
Director of Research  
Drum Major institute for Public Policy

Francisco Corielle  
Student  
International High School

Rudiella Arias  
Hazardous Materials Ground Zero Workers

Altagracias Vargas  
Community member

Soya Mujeres  
Latin America Workers Project

2 [pause]

3 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: This hearing  
4 is very important because as everyone know, the  
5 Senate decided yesterday we are two weeks from  
6 mobilizing to Washington DC. There's a big  
7 mobilization October 2<sup>nd</sup> where all the unions are  
8 bringing buses. Right now we have over 2,000  
9 buses ready to go to Washington DC loud and clear  
10 to let them know that this is time to create jobs  
11 and to go to Immigration reform.

12 Good morning again and welcome to  
13 today's joint hearing on the committee on  
14 Immigration and the committee on Higher Education.  
15 My name is Ydanis Rodriguez and I am chair of the  
16 committee on Higher Education. Before we begin,  
17 I'd like to introduce all the members of the  
18 committee who are present. My colleagues Fernando  
19 Cabrera, my colleague Seabrook and Jumaane  
20 Williams.

21 As you have already heard the  
22 committee on Immigration and Higher Education are  
23 here today to hear testimony about how the Dream  
24 Act could benefit immigrant students in New York  
25 City and for the committee on Immigration to vote

2 on a resolution calling on Congress to pass and  
3 President Obama to sign the Drake Act which would  
4 provide immigration relief to undocumented  
5 students pursuing higher education and to  
6 veterans.

7 Both the city and the state  
8 university of New York allow undocumented  
9 immigrants to obtain their community and senior  
10 colleges. The Dream Act will enable an  
11 undocumented immigrant under 35 who meet certain  
12 conditions such as presence in the United States  
13 for five years, proof of good moral characters  
14 upon graduation in high school or a general  
15 education certificate to be eligible for  
16 conditions permanent residence status. They will  
17 become eligible for permanent status if they serve  
18 in the armed service for two years or if they  
19 obtain or acquire a degree from an accredited  
20 institution for two years.

21 This legislation will provide  
22 opportunities for many New Yorkers and in  
23 providing this opportunity will enrich New York  
24 City. Now I would like to, we have my colleague  
25 Daniel Dromm.

2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very  
3 much, council member Ydanis Rodriguez and other  
4 council members who are with us here today. I  
5 would just like to thank other council members and  
6 all of the advocates who are with us as well on  
7 this all important and timely topic.

8 When I first introduced this  
9 resolution a number of months ago. We did not  
10 know that it would come down to the vote either  
11 yesterday or Thursday. We weren't sure if it was  
12 going to be before or after this hearing. But we  
13 squeezed this right in the middle so either way we  
14 get to have our say on this. So it's on one sense  
15 a sad day because it did not get out of committee  
16 yesterday but in another sense and my feeling is  
17 that it's only the beginning of the battle that we  
18 are going to fight and struggle to make sure that  
19 the Dream Act eventually passes. When we do pass  
20 this vote in the committee today we are going to  
21 send a very clear message to Congress and to the  
22 rest of the nation that we are sick and tired of  
23 waiting for something that should be so simple and  
24 already in fact be law.

25 Good morning my name is Daniel Dromm

2 and I'm the chair of the New York City Council's  
3 committee on Immigration. I would like to thank  
4 council member Rodriguez, chair of the committee  
5 on Higher Education for co-chairing this hearing  
6 with me. I am pleased that we have the  
7 opportunity to hold this hearing on such a timely  
8 issue. The Development, Relief and Education for  
9 Alien Minors act, commonly referred to as the  
10 Dream Act.

11           The Dream Act will provide legal  
12 status and a path to citizenship for undocumented  
13 immigrant youths brought to the United States at a  
14 young age who have obtained a high school diploma  
15 or a GED certificate and want to pursuer higher  
16 Education or service in the Armed Forces.

17 Although the Dream Act has been around since 2001,  
18 it has never been enacted into law. Last week  
19 when Senator Harry Reed announced that he had  
20 proposed to attach the Dream Act to a Department  
21 of Defense authorization bill hope was renewed.

22           Throughout the nation Immigration  
23 Education and human rights activists were  
24 encouraging people to call their Senators in order  
25 to express their support for the Dream Act.

2 Despite the efforts of many supporters of the  
3 Dream Act fell short of the 60 needed to bring the  
4 bill to the Senate floor as an attachment to the  
5 Defense Authorization Bill. Unfortunately the  
6 Senate will not consider the Dream Act this time  
7 around and the dream will have to wait for nearly  
8 1 million undocumented immigrants who would be  
9 eligible to take advantage of it.

10 Although I am disappointed that the  
11 Senate will not be considering the Dream Act this  
12 week, I am impressed by the interest in this issue  
13 and in this population of young population of  
14 people as evidenced by the number of people at  
15 this morning's press conference which we held a  
16 little bit earlier and was one of the reasons why  
17 we were late getting here and at today's hearing.

18 Today we will be considering proposed  
19 resolution number 409a which calls on Congress to  
20 pass and the President to sign the Dream Act. I  
21 would like to encourage my colleagues on the  
22 committee on Immigration to vote in favor of this  
23 resolution so that we can send a clear message to  
24 Congress that something must be done to help these  
25 young people achieve their American dream. So



2 with that I am going to turn it now over to  
3 council member Rodriguez who will call our first  
4 witness.

5 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: First person  
6 is our Manhattan borough President, Scott  
7 Stringer.

8 SCOTT STRINGER: It could be me.  
9 We're not as fancy as the municipal building.  
10 First of all I want to thank all my colleagues on  
11 the council for allowing me testify and I really  
12 want to commend the committee chairs Council  
13 member Dromm and council member Rodriguez for  
14 holding this meeting on such an important reform  
15 that impacts so many New Yorkers and in particular  
16 I want to say that Ydanis Rodriguez, we overlap  
17 districts and I think you have been a great  
18 facilitator for this discussion the neighborhood  
19 that I was born and raised in Washington Heights.  
20 And the fact that you can work with so many people  
21 and council member Dromm I think we need more of  
22 this discussion going forward.

23 And I am here to share your outrage  
24 in anti-immigrant sentiment in parts of the Senate  
25 that prevented the Dream Act from moving forward

2 yesterday. The Dream Act has always been a bi-  
3 partisan endeavor but in a shameful display of  
4 partisan politics, many senators have turned their  
5 backs on immigrant youth, and tried to reject  
6 principal consensus. Now as Manhattan borough  
7 President I am proud to present the historic entre  
8 into the generation of immigrants and over a half  
9 million immigrants who make up 30% of our borough.  
10 Our city and country flourish because of the  
11 positive contribution of immigrants to our  
12 economic, cultural, social and civic life.

13 Since I took office one of our  
14 priorities has been to promote the full and equal  
15 participation of immigrant communities in our city  
16 and in 2006 I convened an immigrants rights task  
17 force to address the lack of resources and support  
18 for immigrants to access the city's services and  
19 benefits and enforce their rights. And this past  
20 June our office released the immigrants rights and  
21 services manual which is a unique and  
22 comprehensive tool for immigrants including  
23 undocumented immigrants and explain legal rights,  
24 public benefit eligibility and public programs and  
25 services in a very accessible way and I would like

2 to share this handbook with all the members of the  
3 city council.

4 The problems we see immigrants face  
5 in our cities is only a microcosm of the greater  
6 story of a broken national immigration system.  
7 The Dream Act would provide long awaited reform  
8 for deserving communities in our city and nation.  
9 Each year approximately 75,000 hard working  
10 immigrant students graduate from high school  
11 across the country but they are unable to access  
12 post secondary education, obtain federal financial  
13 assistance or secure work because of their status.  
14 In 2007 our office launched the civic leaders of  
15 tomorrow fellowship to help provide opportunity  
16 and support for immigrant youth including  
17 undocumented youth in higher education.

18 Civic Leaders places colleges  
19 students in internships with immigrant rights  
20 organizations to develop their civic leadership  
21 and enhance their advocacy work of these  
22 organizations and civic leaders also provides  
23 stipend students to support their ability to  
24 intern and attend college. Our key partner in  
25 Civic Leadership of tomorrow is the New York State

2 Youth Leadership Council whose mission is to  
3 promote the Dream Act, work with immigrant youth,  
4 and train immigrant youth to conduct policy  
5 advocacy. Through Civic Leaders the youth  
6 leadership council train our fellows on advocacy  
7 and promoting the Dream Act. The passage of the  
8 dream Act I believe would benefit many thousands  
9 of students in New York City alone, including and  
10 estimated 10,000 University of New York CUNY  
11 students.

12 The bill would offer a clear path for  
13 citizenship for hardworking immigrant youth and  
14 allow them to complete higher education or serve  
15 in the military. Passing the Dream Act will bring  
16 these young people fully into the formal economy  
17 which will in turn grow our skilled work force and  
18 increase revenues. It will deter them from the  
19 risk of dropping out of school or other harmful  
20 paths. In many cases these young people know of  
21 no other country but the U. S. as their home.

22 I want to just say from my personal  
23 experience growing up in our community, council  
24 member Rodriguez, like many of us we have all been  
25 raised and all got to know people from all

2 different backgrounds. I always felt that the  
3 school yard at PS 152 was a microcosm of what the  
4 city would be and the fact that it all starts at  
5 the youngest age in public school, people who come  
6 from different places to make the city and country  
7 great. The fact that we had this national setback  
8 yesterday should motivate city councils around the  
9 country to stand up and be counted on this issue.  
10 As usual, New York City must take the lead and I  
11 just want to close by thanking you. It would have  
12 been easy to cancel this hearing, it would have  
13 been easy not to have this hearing at all. But  
14 the fact that all folks here today who represent  
15 different organizations recognize the need for us  
16 to spend more time figuring out ways to make it a  
17 pathway for our next generation of leaders who  
18 come from all over the world. I want to thank you  
19 and if you have any questions I would be happy to  
20 answer them. But thank you both.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very  
22 much borough President. No questions. I  
23 appreciate your support important and I'd like to  
24 take a look at that booklet that you were  
25 mentioning as well.

2 MR. STIRNGER: We will send it over.

3 Thank you council member, thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I'd also like to  
5 announce that we were joined by council member  
6 Eugene from Brooklyn and also council member  
7 Julissa Ferreras from my neighboring district in  
8 Queens. And at this time, I'd like to ask my  
9 counsel Jillian Beckford to read the resolution  
10 into the record. Jillian?

11 JILLIAN BECKFORD: Proposed  
12 resolution number 409a, a resolution calling on  
13 Congress to pass and President Obama to sign the  
14 Developments, Relief and Education for Alien  
15 Minors Act of 2009, the Dream Act, in order to  
16 provide immigration relief to undocumented  
17 immigrant students pursuing higher education and  
18 to undocumented immigrants who serve in the armed  
19 forces. Whereas approximately 16% of the nation's  
20 estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants are  
21 under the age of 18 and whereas generally children  
22 brought to the United States at a young age by  
23 their undocumented parents derive their  
24 immigration status from their parents and have no  
25 right to obtain legal or permanent resident status

2 through any other manner and whereas this  
3 population of young people is always at risk of  
4 deportation, lacking any legal status there forced  
5 to live in the shadows of society without a path  
6 to citizenship.

7           And whereas, undocumented immigrants  
8 cannot legally work in the United States in order  
9 to support themselves and whereas undocumented  
10 immigrant youths who want to pursue higher  
11 education are generally ineligible for most forms  
12 of financial aid because of their immigration  
13 status. And whereas, although undocumented  
14 immigrant children are entitled to public  
15 education through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade like their United  
16 States citizens counterparts, it is unclear  
17 whether these same children are entitled to public  
18 higher education and whereas, although  
19 undocumented immigrant youths may legally enroll  
20 in most colleges and universities, current  
21 immigration law makes it difficult for them to pay  
22 for higher education because they are ineligible  
23 for most forms of financial aid and whereas,  
24 section 505 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and  
25 Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 which

2 requires that states providing a higher education  
3 benefit based on residency to undocumented  
4 immigrants provide that same benefit to U.S.  
5 citizens regardless of their state residence has  
6 been interpreted to prohibit states from offering  
7 undocumented students who attend state colleges  
8 and universities in-state tuition rates and  
9 whereas despite this narrow interpretation ten  
10 states have enacted laws that allow anyone  
11 including undocumented immigrants to pay in-state  
12 tuition rates at public colleges and universities  
13 so long as they attend and graduated from high  
14 school in the United States since section 505  
15 IRIRA [phonetic] went into effect and whereas for  
16 example undocumented students who meet specific  
17 criteria are eligible to pay in state tuition  
18 rates at schools within the city university of New  
19 York and the state university of New York systems.  
20 And whereas, despite in-state tuition rates many  
21 undocumented immigrant youths are still ineligible  
22 for most forms of financial aid and because they  
23 cannot legally work it is difficult if not  
24 impossible for them to attend institutions of  
25 higher education and whereas undocumented



2 immigrant youths often choose to serve in U.S.  
3 armed forces as an alternative to pursuing higher  
4 education at the end of their high school careers  
5 and whereas despite their displays of  
6 appreciation, support and commitment for this  
7 country these young people must often wait  
8 indefinitely to be deemed citizens of this country  
9 and whereas, beginning in 2001 when section 505  
10 IRIRA went into effect legislation has been  
11 repeatedly introduced in Congress in an effort to  
12 amend immigration law and provide undocumented  
13 students with the opportunity to apply for legal  
14 permanent resident status and eligibility for some  
15 forms of financial aid.

16           And whereas, this legislation is  
17 commonly referred to as the Development, Relief,  
18 Education for Alien Minors Act, the Dream Act.  
19 Whereas the Dream Act was introduced on March 26,  
20 2009 by Senators Richard Durbin and Richard Lugar.  
21 And whereas, also March 26, 2009 represents Mr.  
22 Howard Berman, Lincoln Diaz Allard and Lucille  
23 Roybal-Allard introduced the sister bill in the  
24 house of representatives called the American Dream  
25 Act. And whereas the Dream Act was incorporated

2 in the comprehensive immigration reform for  
3 America's Security and Prosperity act 2009, HR  
4 4321 introduced on December 12, 2009 by  
5 representatives Solomon Ortiz and Luiz Gutierrez.  
6 And whereas elements of the Dream Act are included  
7 in the bi-partisan plan for immigration reform  
8 legislation introduced by Senators Chuck Schumer  
9 and Lindsay Graham on March 18, 2010.

10 And whereas on September 14, 2010  
11 Senator Harry Reed announced that he would attach  
12 the Dream Act to the Department of Defense  
13 Authorization Act for fiscal year 2011 which is  
14 expected is expected to be voted on by the full  
15 Senate in late September 2010 and whereas the  
16 Dream Act would amend IRIRA to appeal section 505  
17 in order to allow states to provide higher  
18 education benefits to undocumented immigrants.  
19 And whereas under the Dream Act, eligible students  
20 would be able to apply for a six year conditional  
21 legal permanent status that would allow them to  
22 work, go to school and be eligible for federal  
23 work study, student loans and certain forms of  
24 federal financial aid grants. And whereas at the  
25 end of the conditional period an eligible

2 immigrant student would be granted legal permanent  
3 resident status if he or she has good moral  
4 character, avoiding lengthy trips out of the  
5 United States and either graduated from two year  
6 college or study for at least two years towards a  
7 bachelor of arts or higher degree or served in the  
8 armed forces. And whereas it is estimated that  
9 approximately 65,000 undocumented immigrant  
10 students who were raised in the United States  
11 would benefit from the Dream Act.

12 And whereas, if enacted the Dream act  
13 would allow an estimated 360,000 undocumented high  
14 school graduates to work legally and attend  
15 college and will provide incentives to an  
16 additional 715,000 undocumented youth between the  
17 ages of five and 17 to finish high school and  
18 pursue higher education. And whereas, it is  
19 disappointing that the United States Senate voted  
20 to block debate on an amendment to the Permanent  
21 Defense Authorization Act that would have included  
22 the Dream Act. And whereas, despite this setback  
23 Congress must continue to make the Dream Act a top  
24 legislative priority.

25 Now, therefore be it resolved the

2 council of the city of New York calls on Congress  
3 to pass and President Obama to sign the  
4 Development Relief and Education to Alien Minors  
5 Act of 2009 in order to provide immigration relief  
6 to undocumented immigration students pursuing  
7 higher education and to undocumented immigrants to  
8 serve in the armed forces.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And now what I'd  
10 like to do is call for a vote on the resolution of  
11 the members of the immigration committee who are  
12 here with us and we will keep the vote open until  
13 the end of the meeting for others who may be  
14 joining us. So with that I'm going to ask Billy  
15 Martin, excuse me, to call the roll.

16 WILLIAM MARTIN: William Martin,  
17 committee clerk. Roll call and vote on the  
18 committee on immigration, resolution number 409a.  
19 Council member Dromm.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Aye.

21 MR. MARTIN: Eugene.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Aye. Can I  
23 say some few words? Yes, I just want to take the  
24 opportunity to commend the chairman of the  
25 committee, council member Dromm also council

2 member Rodriguez and all my colleagues and all the  
3 members of the different committee and  
4 organization here today. It is something very  
5 important not only for the children but for  
6 America, for the United States. When I look at  
7 the audience I can see the a cross section of New  
8 York, a cross section of the United States. All  
9 of us, it is very important and I recommend all of  
10 you to come together and to ensure that this very  
11 important bill be passed because we are talking  
12 about the future of this country. We are talking  
13 brand. This is the best investment that we can do  
14 as a society, an investment of the education of  
15 the young people. We are talking about future  
16 leaders. Those young people who don't have the  
17 opportunity to go to college, what is the option  
18 they have when they cannot pursue their education?  
19 Go to the wrong side? But by doing that we're  
20 going to dig them from the negative part and bring  
21 them to the world of success and empowerment. And  
22 I commend all of you and I am proud to vote yes.  
23 I vote aye.

24 MR. MARTIN: Rodriguez.

25 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Si, se

2 puede. Yes.

3 MR. MARTIN: Williams.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: May I  
5 please explain my vote?

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you.  
8 I'm very excited to be here. I want to thank  
9 council member Dromm and council member Rodriguez  
10 for putting this hearing together. I'm very glad  
11 I sit actually on both committees. The Dream Act  
12 is probably one of the most sensible things that  
13 Congress can do right now in terms of immigration.  
14 I'm a first generation Brooklynite. My parents  
15 come from the Caribbean. And they for a very long  
16 time were not citizens of the country and my  
17 district represents 80 or 90% of people who come  
18 from a different country. As most of us our  
19 grandparents or great grandparents came from  
20 somewhere else. What disturbs me is the hypocrisy  
21 of those who won't support this. This city in  
22 particular and this country in general benefits  
23 from documented and undocumented immigrants  
24 through their skills, through the things that they  
25 bring to this country through the taxes they pay

2 every time they buy something and it disturbs me  
3 that the United States and the city want to  
4 benefit from these immigrants but don't want to  
5 afford them a favorable pathway to citizenship so  
6 they can join the armed forces but they can't get  
7 an education. This is not good to say the least  
8 and I hope and pray that this sends a message to  
9 other councils across the country to send a  
10 message that we need to do this, this is only the  
11 fair thing to do. We can't have a million people  
12 walking around without the ability to get an  
13 education, without the ability to get a job. I  
14 think it was, they are not going to go back home I  
15 think it was committee member Lewis Black you  
16 can't arrest three million people right now,  
17 what's wrong with you? It's not just going to  
18 happen, let's just focus on people who benefit our  
19 country a pathway to citizenship. I'm very proud  
20 to vote aye.

21 MR. MARTIN: By a vote of four in the  
22 affirmative and zero in the negative and no  
23 abstentions, item is adopted. Members please sign  
24 the committee report.

25 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright and what

2 I'd like to do now is to bring up some people who  
3 are going to give testimony on the bill and to put  
4 a human face on why passage of the Dream Act is so  
5 important and I'd like to thank everybody's for  
6 their patience while we went through some of these  
7 formalities but we really do need to hear from  
8 everybody who has signed up for speaking time  
9 today. Very very important. And first I'd like  
10 to call up Eduardo Martine, Vice Chancellor for  
11 Community Colleges at CUNY, Jennifer Rabb,  
12 President CUNY of Hunter College, Allan Warnick,  
13 Director of Citizenship Now at CUNY, and Walter  
14 Barrios, a CUNY Student. And President Martine if  
15 you would like to start.

16 MR. MARTINE: Council member  
17 Rodriguez, Council member Dromm it is a pleasure  
18 to be here and to testify on our behalf. My name  
19 as you said is Eduardo Martine and I currently  
20 serve as Vice Chancellor for community colleges at  
21 City University of New York. I am testifying on  
22 behalf of Resolution 409a as has been said before  
23 calling on Congress and President Obama to sign  
24 the Dream Act on/or to incorporate the provisions  
25 of the Dream Act in a comprehensive immigration



2 reform bill.

3           Permit me to express my deep  
4 appreciation to the city council for considering  
5 this hearing to hear this enlightened resolution.  
6 You have always been a friend of public education,  
7 your support of CUNY has been consistent and even  
8 in times of most difficult fiscal constraints,  
9 your actions have demonstrated your appreciation  
10 for the connection between the education and the  
11 economy. CUNY has always been an economic engine  
12 for the New York City and you are always there to  
13 ensure that it continues to provide an effective  
14 education for all New Yorkers. Further, the  
15 community colleges at CUNY with the open  
16 admissions policy provide ready access to our  
17 universities and it is through this ports of entry  
18 provided by the CUNY community colleges that  
19 affords immigrants have been able to start a path  
20 towards a better life. From perfecting their  
21 language skills to preparing themselves to  
22 navigate this very complex society in which we  
23 live.

24           As our Chancellor Matthew Goldstein  
25 has said to our congressional leadership

2 demonstrating his long standing support of the  
3 Dream Act, "our experience in the city of New York  
4 teaches us that undocumented students are among  
5 those with the greatest potential to play leading  
6 roles in scholarship, public service and economic  
7 leadership. Among them are honor students, star  
8 athletes, talented artists, aspiring teachers,  
9 doctors, scientists, poets, and U.S. soldiers. As  
10 the demand for talented college trained workers  
11 increases we need these students as full  
12 participants in our society".

13 I can speak to you on this topic from  
14 the heart. I am an immigrant. I came from Cuba  
15 50 years ago on a visitor's visa and if it had not  
16 been for my ability to gain legal status by asking  
17 for political asylum, I could have easily been an  
18 undocumented student. Through hard work I was  
19 able to complete my education and gain the skills  
20 to be a productive citizen. Frankly, I could have  
21 gone in different directions but when I started my  
22 job teaching at BMCC in 1966 I fell in love with  
23 the community college concept. This uniquely  
24 American egalitarian system of public post  
25 secondary education is truly extraordinary and I

2 have dedicated my entire professional life to this  
3 sector of higher education. In fact I am the only  
4 person who has been both President of the state  
5 university of New York community colleges and city  
6 university of New York community colleges and I  
7 have done that for over 28 years.

8 Now I have the privilege of the first  
9 CUNY vice Chancellor for community colleges. As  
10 someone who cares deeply about access and equality  
11 I can attest firsthand as to the impact of  
12 community colleges on the thousands of immigrant  
13 students whom we serve. Many come to us not  
14 knowing what to expect from college experience,  
15 many come to us for the need of remediation for  
16 English as a second language, many come to us with  
17 no clear understanding of a myriad of  
18 possibilities that this society provides.

19 Community colleges provide faculty provides a safe  
20 haven. It has been said the colleges are called  
21 the Ellis Islands of education and you can  
22 understand the immigrant experience. You know  
23 what it means to be in a strange land, not knowing  
24 the language, not knowing the mores of society.  
25 You know what it means to try to find a job in a

2 difficult economic markets. You know how  
3 comforting it is to be in a place where people  
4 care about your success where people want you to  
5 gain the knowledge and skills to better yourself.  
6 You know how important CUNY is to New York City.

7           The proposed legislation is about  
8 equity as well. You are here again showing the  
9 world that New York City is a place where all  
10 immigrants who work hard and who are willing to  
11 contribute so society can succeed. As a city of  
12 immigrants where education and opportunity go hand  
13 and hand we must support the passage of the Dream  
14 Act. But the passage of the Dream Act makes  
15 economic sense as well. Coincidentally in  
16 yesterday's New York Times Tamar Levin wrote about  
17 a College Board study that shows that the median  
18 earnings for full time workers with Associate  
19 Degrees was \$42,000 in 2008. And that was \$8,200  
20 greater than a high school graduate. In another  
21 article in the same edition it is estimated that  
22 if the Dream Act passes 726,000 undocumented will  
23 become immediately eligible for legal status.  
24 This translates into a possible 600 million  
25 dollars influx into our economy.

2           In addition, according to the census  
3 bureau over the adult's working life, high school  
4 graduates earn about 1.2 million dollars,  
5 Associate's Degree holders earn about 1.6 million  
6 dollars and Bachelor's Degree holders earn about  
7 2.1 million. Even though some may question this  
8 assertion pegging the number at around \$450,000  
9 the numbers are truly staggering. If the  
10 estimates are correct there are at least 65,000  
11 high school graduates per year who contribute  
12 anywhere between 40 million dollars if you look at  
13 the conservative estimate to 70 million dollars if  
14 you look at the more I believe accurate estimate.  
15 And that will be done for the foreseeable future  
16 so when you start adding the numbers you can  
17 understand the cost benefit of this legislation.

18           So I'm very grateful that you as the  
19 New York city council are taking the lead in  
20 proposing this resolution. The Dream Act is about  
21 what America is all about. A gentle caring  
22 society who welcomes new waves of immigrants and  
23 that through education and service creates a  
24 unique culture based on mutual respect and  
25 understanding. Let's hope that Congress votes in

2 favor of this legislation. I thank you for your  
3 attention. I will be very happy to answer any  
4 questions that you might have. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Mr.  
6 Vice Chancellor and I just want to say it was a  
7 pleasure to have the opportunity to work with you  
8 as the President of Queensborough Community  
9 College and I appreciate your commitment to  
10 diversity and particularly to the development of  
11 the Holocaust exhibit. Thank you. Mr. Warnick?

12 ALLAN WARNICK: Thank you. Good  
13 morning Chairman Dromm, Chairman Rodriguez and  
14 members of the city council Higher Education and  
15 Immigration committees. My name is Allan Warnick,  
16 I am a professor at Baruch College at CUNY and I'm  
17 the Director of CUNY's Citizenship Now! Which is  
18 the largest citizenship and immigration law  
19 service provider in New York City and I also just  
20 want to mention that my colleagues from  
21 Citizenship Now, Oona Park who is the directing  
22 attorney at our Flushing office, and Andres Slevin  
23 [phonetic] who is the directing attorney at our  
24 CUNY express office in Washington Heights. So I  
25 just brought them here for just a little moral

2 support to take them away from their busy days. I  
3 appreciate this opportunity to speak to the New  
4 York City Council on this effort to assist  
5 undocumented immigrant students by endorsing  
6 passage of the Dream act. Citizenship Now, as a  
7 front line immigrant services provider, is keenly  
8 aware of the need to provide a pathway to legal  
9 citizenship status for undocumented youth and to  
10 allow public colleges and universities to make  
11 generous rules regarding the tuition required from  
12 undocumented students.

13 Before I continue with our discussion  
14 the impact the Dream Act will have on New York  
15 City immigrant youths I would like to take the  
16 opportunity to thank both of your committees for  
17 their support CUNY Citizenship Now! and for the  
18 struggle for immigrant's rights. And I want to  
19 give a special shout out to the Brooklyn,  
20 Manhattan and Bronx delegates of the city council  
21 particularly members Williams, Rodriguez and  
22 Seabrook for your generous support for immigrant  
23 opportunity initiative funding for Citizenship  
24 Now! Your support means free legal citizenship  
25 for thousands of immigrant New Yorkers. I

2 appreciate that personal privilege there.

3 CUNY and its Chancellor Matthew  
4 Goldstein are long time supporters of the Dream  
5 Act. On three separate occasions beginning in  
6 2002 and most recently just this week, Chancellor  
7 Goldstein has urged Congress to pass legislation  
8 that would help undocumented students advance  
9 towards U.S. citizenship. You have heard from two  
10 voices and you will hear more today from some of  
11 our leaders in CUNY in addition to add to those  
12 voices the Chancellor and as Director of  
13 Citizenship Now! I offer my perspective. At our  
14 nine centers located throughout New York City  
15 where we assisted close to 8,000 individuals in  
16 New York City in the last year alone in our annual  
17 calling co-sponsored by the New York Daily News  
18 where in the past few years we answered questions  
19 from almost 85,000 and in our many weekend  
20 citizenship of many of which has been co-sponsored  
21 by your committees we have heard constant calls  
22 for passage of the Dream Act. Undocumented young  
23 people driven by their desire to advance their  
24 education, their careers, and their contribution  
25 to this country yearn for a path toward legal



2 status. As a professor who's known at CUNY for my  
3 involvement with immigrant students not a week  
4 goes by where I don't hear from a colleague about  
5 an outstanding student who is graduating but with  
6 little hope of finding meaningful employment.  
7 Among these students are some of the best and  
8 brightest young scholars in the nation. Yet to a  
9 lack of legal status they are unable to achieve  
10 the career goals of which they dream.

11 The work of Citizenship Now! has  
12 taken to communities all over New York City. But  
13 as a long time resident of Washington Heights I'm  
14 particularly aware of the concerns of students at  
15 a high school in my own neighborhood typical of a  
16 neighborhood throughout New York City, one with  
17 which Chairman Rodriguez has worked very closely  
18 with for many years, that's Gregorio Luperone High  
19 School. I've visited that high school many times  
20 and spoken to the students there. And we look at  
21 the ambitions of the predominantly former students  
22 and attendants at Luperone. We see young people  
23 with ambitions in the same manner as immigrants  
24 did in past generations. A portion of them are  
25 undocumented. We owe these students the path to

2 succeed because they have the same drive and  
3 talent and ability as other students they very  
4 much want to attend college and to graduate, they  
5 are the future of our city and their stories are  
6 replicated throughout the community and every  
7 neighborhood in our city.

8 One final point, we like to call CUNY  
9 the immigrant friendly university yet restrictive  
10 federal laws limit access to CUNY education to  
11 many undocumented students. These laws restrict  
12 our ability to provide higher education to this  
13 group by taking away our control over which  
14 students qualify for resident tuition.

15 While state legislation has done much  
16 to ameliorate this problem the law mandates that  
17 many undocumented's still pay the higher out of  
18 state tuition. Further, as undocumented students  
19 are ineligible for state and federal aid many  
20 cannot afford to study at all and many are forced  
21 to study just part time. Limitations placed on  
22 our financial aid programs by state and federal  
23 law harm undocumented students the most. They bar  
24 undocumented students from receiving TAP, PELL and  
25 other government programs. We urge the council in

2 its resolution and its efforts to support the  
3 Dream Act, to support a version of the Dream Act  
4 that would allow the Dream Act beneficiaries to  
5 immediately qualify for federal financial  
6 assistance. CUNY Citizenship Now! wholeheartedly  
7 supports the council's efforts to support the  
8 Dream Act and will continue working with you to  
9 assure passage of the legislation. And at the  
10 appropriate time I would be happy to answer any  
11 questions.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you Mr.  
13 Warnick. President Rabb.

14 JENNIFER RABB: Thank you Mr.  
15 Chairman. My name is Jennifer Rabb, I am the  
16 President of the extraordinary Hunter College at  
17 the City University of New York. I thank both  
18 Chair Dromm and Rodriguez and to all the council  
19 men and women who are here today for having this  
20 hearing and I asked to be part of the panel today  
21 because I wanted to be part of urging our  
22 political leader to help us change what has truly  
23 become a tragic situation on our campus. This is  
24 really a tragic situation for the hard working  
25 thousands of talented people who have devoted to

2 their studies but who never have the opportunity  
3 to use what they have learned to better society.  
4 It's tragic for those of us who know these young  
5 people are really powerless to help them and it's  
6 tragic for our country where we are investing in  
7 this talent. This is the human capital that we  
8 are creating and yet at a time we need it more  
9 than ever we can't put it to use.

10 As the President of the largest  
11 senior college and one of the most selective  
12 colleges in CUNY I want to underscore the  
13 importance of today. It is not just the wonderful  
14 open access community colleges that are accepting  
15 undocumented illegal aliens it's very selective  
16 schools like Hunter, Baruch, and City. And we are  
17 selecting these students we take one out of every  
18 four at Hunter College and many hundreds of  
19 students are illegal aliens and are not able to  
20 work and when they graduate are not able to join  
21 society in productive jobs. I first began to  
22 focus on this situation after a student meeting I  
23 had years ago. I had student meetings I often  
24 have food because that brings our students to a  
25 meeting. And I began to notice that upon the end

2 of the meeting there are a few students who  
3 actually who were actually sort of taking the  
4 snacks with them and it was actually explained to  
5 me when I realize how tragic the situation is that  
6 many of these students are hungry. Our students  
7 cannot work in legal jobs so they are forced to  
8 work in underground jobs of tutoring or  
9 babysitting or catch as catch can situations to  
10 support themselves. Other faces of other students  
11 of other stories to put faces on the stories you  
12 just heard. We have an extraordinary woman who  
13 came to Hunter College and came here as a child  
14 from Poland. She had an exceptional academic  
15 record in a double major in Math and Computer  
16 Science. Two career paths that are desperately  
17 needed and where women are highly  
18 underrepresented. She was a brilliant young  
19 scholar we could not send her to graduate school  
20 we could not send her to work when we graduated  
21 her. A young woman came from Pakistan also an  
22 economics major wanted to get her MBA, could not  
23 get an internship that would've gotten her in a  
24 school. A student from Albania applied for an  
25 honors scholarship was given the scholarship we

2 could then not give him the scholarship because we  
3 found out that he was undocumented. So we sit and  
4 we have these conversations with our students. We  
5 know them we know their faces. We recommend them  
6 I personally recommended a student for an  
7 internship in a political office. The elected  
8 representative was excited to have this talented  
9 young man and then could not take him because he  
10 did not have a social security number. So there  
11 is so much that we have to do here. Hunter  
12 College students want to work. They prove it as  
13 students because they are earning degrees while  
14 they're holding whatever jobs and supporting  
15 themselves and often their families. Their eager  
16 and uniquely qualified to give back to their  
17 communities after they graduate. We are turning  
18 out nurses, health providers, educators, social  
19 workers and future leaders of our city. Many earn  
20 graduate acceptance into top graduate programs and  
21 are finding particularly, the law schools and  
22 other professional programs that demand proof of  
23 documentation they cannot accept these offers to  
24 these prestigious programs.

25 We believe the proper stipulations

2 are in place to ensure the Dream Act serves to  
3 benefit only those with demonstrated backgrounds,  
4 credentials and experience. And that no  
5 government assistance would be siphoned away from  
6 American born students which is one of the  
7 arguments we are hearing in Washington. What  
8 we're hearing now about the fact the students  
9 should not be funded really ignores a critical  
10 element that no democratic society should  
11 criminalize a child's innocent conduct. And  
12 that's what we see, these students were children  
13 came here and they are being penalized now for  
14 something that is not their fault. Hunter College  
15 as of all of CUNY was founded on the commitment to  
16 provide education do an opportunity available to  
17 all. And we certainly respect and support  
18 government limitations based on an overt legality.  
19 But we object to barring opportunities to hard  
20 working students who would never have done  
21 anywhere but America to call home. Later in this  
22 hearing you are going to hear from a wonderful  
23 woman and I don't know if she's going to give her  
24 name so I won't. She is one of our extraordinary  
25 Hunter students who wants to continue to be a

2 productive student in the city and we need to get  
3 the Dream Act passed that she can continue her  
4 education and she can go on to continue. The  
5 Dream Act makes economic sense, it makes social  
6 sense, it makes great moral sense because these  
7 students and every young person from this country  
8 from whatever background deserves a fair chance  
9 should succeed at the American Dream. Thank you  
10 for hearing me today.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very  
12 much. Mr. Barrios.

13 WALTER BARRIOS: Good morning, my  
14 name is Walter Barrios and I am currently a second  
15 year graduate student in Public Affairs Baruch  
16 College. I'm here today because until very  
17 recently the Dream Act was my only hope of not  
18 being deported in obtaining immigration status.  
19 I know first hand what immigration status has in  
20 obtaining higher education. I'm originally from  
21 Guatemala. My parent's sister came to New York in  
22 1996 after my parent's business went bankrupt and  
23 we lost our home. My parents could no longer  
24 afford to send my sister and I to school. We  
25 arrived on tourists visas. It was our last resort



2 and it was here in New York where we had the only  
3 family members who could help us at the time. My  
4 parents were determined to work as hard they could  
5 while my sister and I could get an education, our  
6 ticket to a better life. My parents worked 18  
7 hour days doing everything from making food to  
8 sell, collecting bottles to recycle, to  
9 construction and cleaning houses and factories.  
10 Five years after we arrived in 2001 my aunt was  
11 able to become a citizen and petition for my  
12 mother including my sister and I. Although the  
13 application was approved shortly after it was  
14 filed it was not until last month in August of  
15 2010 that a visa became available for my mother.  
16 While my mom's application was pending my sister  
17 and I aged out of the application since we both  
18 turned 21. When my mother's application was  
19 pending I graduate high school in 2002 where I  
20 ranked fifth in my class. I was able to attend  
21 Baruch college and obtain my bachelor's degree in  
22 Business Administration because in that fall the  
23 state passed a law allowing undocumented New York  
24 High School students like me to pay in-state  
25 tuition regardless of our immigration status.

2 Given my lack of immigration status at the time I  
3 could not receive any scholarships nor could I  
4 apply for any student loans or other programs that  
5 were offered to me. If it was not for this law I  
6 would probably not have been able to attend  
7 college right after high school and I would  
8 definitely not be a graduate student today. My  
9 parents rented rooms in the house we already  
10 rented from someone and we all worked any job that  
11 came by so that we could afford a college  
12 education. I made copies of every book I needed  
13 for my classes and took as many courses per  
14 semester as I could to allow me to graduate as  
15 quickly as I could and save the most money. I  
16 received my undergraduate degree in May of 2006  
17 but unlike most of my other friends and fellow  
18 graduates I was not easily employable. I decided  
19 to dedicate my time educating and empowering other  
20 immigrant youths in New York to know how to apply  
21 for college regardless of their immigration status  
22 like I had done and to continue to dream for the  
23 Dream Act to pass. During this time I had no  
24 choice but to work in the underground economy to  
25 support myself. My parents the rights and

2 opportunities of immigrant youths fighting for the  
3 dignity of all immigrant parents who sacrifice  
4 life as they know it to come to the United State  
5 so their children can have a better life. The  
6 American dream.

7 My immigration status changed because  
8 I was a victim of an assault in Jackson Heights  
9 last year and I was granted a U Visa as a victim  
10 of a violent crime. I am now protected form  
11 deportation with a work permit and a social  
12 security number and in a few years I will be able  
13 to apply for a green card. If all goes well and  
14 immigration laws do not change for the worse I  
15 should be becoming a citizen by 2020. That would  
16 be 24 years after my arrival here in the United  
17 States in 1996. Although I'm still not a  
18 permanent resident, being protected from  
19 deportation and being able to work legally have  
20 completely changed my life as I have come to know  
21 it after living here in New York without  
22 immigration status since the age of 11. The  
23 biggest difference is knowing that I can no longer  
24 just be detained and deported by a random stop by  
25 the police or being at the wrong place at the

wrong time. I can now really embrace my home in my life here as my own and not as something that has been borrowed to me and can be easily taken away. I am no longer vulnerable to the exploitation and harsh working conditions that many of the city's undocumented people are subjected to. Many of whom are parents of CUNY students and CUNY students themselves working to pursue their dreams and a better tomorrow. In many ways I feel as though at the age of 25, I turned 16. Because now at the age of 25 I was able to go to the DMV and start driving, and I was able to start working. Now as hard as grad school is life feels so much lighter. I am able to focus on my studies and my career as I am able to pursue my opportunities to my community and empower young people to pursue higher education and a better life here in New York and the United States as a whole. While I consider myself incredibly lucky and privileged to be protected from deportation and being able to work legally and pursue my graduate education I believe these are protections all immigrants in the United States should have. While there are many of us who have struggled

2 against all odds to graduate from CUNY colleges  
3 and Community colleges while being undocumented  
4 there are at least five of our classmates who have  
5 given up along the way throughout our high school  
6 years or could no longer get to the finish line in  
7 college with us.

8 Many times it comes down to financing  
9 but more often than not it is the weight of  
10 realizing that no matter how hard we work and how  
11 hard we apply ourselves there are laws that  
12 literally prevent our dreams and promise to keep  
13 our dreams hidden in the underground economy.

14 This is why I know that the Dream Act is a  
15 necessity for our families, communities, and for  
16 cities and for our state. Without the Dream Act  
17 we have federal immigration laws invalidating the  
18 sacrifices of our families and the investment of  
19 our communities and young people who are committed  
20 to a better life for themselves and their  
21 communities. Holding back promising youth is  
22 never a good proposition in these times of dire  
23 need and diverse pool of leaders and strivers to  
24 take our nation to reach new heights. Thank you  
25 for supporting the Dream Act and for standing up

2 for New York City's immigrant youth and families.  
3 Thank you for doing your part to ensure that the  
4 Dream Act is passed this year.

5 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

6 Before I ask any questions I want to say that as a  
7 former teacher at Gregorio Luperone high school as  
8 Allan has said, every year when graduation come I  
9 have to face a reality that most of our top  
10 students at Luperone they are undocumented. From  
11 their commencement, Jaqueline Cinto [phonetic] who  
12 is one of those five persons who walk for New York  
13 City to Washington DC was one of those students  
14 who was undocumented when she graduated from  
15 Luperone. I remember like right now having  
16 teaching Jaqueline Cinto in social studies class  
17 and seeing Jaqueline Cinto growing now not only as  
18 a high school student but as a someone who went to  
19 college and got a BA is continued education going  
20 back to Luperone two years ago to be the keynote  
21 speaker at the school I think is enough for me to  
22 say Jaqueline Cinto had the opportunity she did  
23 it, each teenager who graduate from high school  
24 should also have the opportunity. And they should  
25 have the opportunity because they need more

2 support. Not everyone is Jaqueline Cinto who have  
3 a lot of support from the family and teachers who  
4 also have the self determination of I will move  
5 forward. No one will be - - for me to pursue my  
6 higher education. And that's also the message at  
7 the same time we are struggling and we are  
8 fighting to get the Dream Act passed.

9           The message we have to send to all  
10 those right wings who opposed the Dream Act  
11 yesterday that no one will stop our teenagers from  
12 graduating from college. It will be more  
13 difficult for them to graduate if they don't have  
14 the Dream Act but we are moving forward. The  
15 number is growing and especially at this moment  
16 when we need to have a bigger picture of what is  
17 the future of this nation. We have to be clear  
18 that we need to invest more especially on our  
19 young or in our education and so I just wanted to  
20 share that story about Jaqueline Cinto which is  
21 the same story as Jerebel Lopez who was also one  
22 of our valedictorian or Grismilda who now is  
23 working at CUNY but at one point she was  
24 undocumented. So all this year there's a number  
25 of undocumented students from Luperone the school

2 that is located in my district that we are doing  
3 the best we can John - - can help us to get the  
4 student into the classroom and I think that yes we  
5 are going to appreciate you have to thank John and  
6 Jay but we should not have to go through that  
7 experience. We should not, our students they  
8 should have the opportunity to pursue their higher  
9 education. My first question is what percentage of  
10 high school undocumented students do you have as  
11 far as you know at CUNY right now?

12 MR. WARNICK: First let me say that  
13 unlike some states we integrate our undocumented  
14 students in our general population so our numbers  
15 are not, you know we don't, they don't wear a band  
16 that says they are undocumented students but we  
17 estimate around 3.4% or about 7,000 of our  
18 students are undocumented. About 3.4% is our  
19 estimate.

20 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: 3-4%?

21 MR. WARNICK: 3.4%.

22 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: From the 260-

23 MR. WARNICK: From 260,000 that's  
24 right.

25 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And is that,



2 when you look at community college what is the  
3 percentage of that?

4 MR. WARNICK: Mostly we would, I  
5 don't have the exact numbers but the numbers are  
6 higher in community college, definitely.

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: But what is  
8 the estimate?

9 MR. MARTINE: I can tell you from  
10 Queensborough, we estimated, we don't know for  
11 sure but we estimate about 8,000 students.

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: 8,000 from  
13 how many?

14 MR. MARTINE: Queensborough we have  
15 about 14,000.

16 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: How will the  
17 dream act in your experience will help that 1,000  
18 or the newest student graduating from?

19 MR. MARTINE: The way to, the way the  
20 Dream Act would enable the students to first of  
21 all get loans. Once they got the Associate  
22 degree, they would be able to get the permanent  
23 residency they would then be able to get the  
24 financial aid to be able to get into the four year  
25 colleges.

2                   So at the very beginning in the first  
3 two years it would be on a student loan basis  
4 because they are not able to get the financial aid  
5 but once they get the permanent status then they  
6 can get the financial aid. So it is a huge, huge  
7 way in which we can help the students. Now  
8 remember if you are a person coming from and  
9 undocumented family I think we all know this, as  
10 was said before the families are really in the  
11 lowest portion of the economic ladder. And the  
12 tuition like the one we charge even though it's  
13 minimal compared to private institutions. It's  
14 really sometimes, most of the time way beyond the  
15 reach of individual families. So they have to do  
16 things like your family did, extraordinary efforts  
17 to be able to do it.

18                   When I was a student back in the dark  
19 ages there was no financial aid, it was prior to  
20 the Higher Education Act, it was 1960's, '61-62.  
21 I had not financial aid when I came as an immigrant  
22 and I remember many times, Jennifer, I would have  
23 there was a university I went to had a tea at  
24 4:00. And many times that was my only meal for  
25 the day. Cookies and teas. And it is really a

2 plight for students to be able to, it takes an  
3 extraordinary student to be able to withstand that  
4 type of pressure to be able to graduate without  
5 any financial aid. The Dream Act will give that  
6 financial aid.

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: What is the  
8 drop out- as everyone know we have addressed the  
9 issue like in the past and other hearings at  
10 community colleges we have an estimate of only 27%  
11 of student graduating from community college.  
12 Because of so many factors. It is not yes because  
13 of CUNY but yes because the student being ready to  
14 deal with the demand that they have in the  
15 classroom but also in the factor of the student  
16 being undocumented. When you look at reality of  
17 undocumented students what percentage of students  
18 do you believe that drop out from community  
19 college?

20 MR. MARTINE: Undocumented students  
21 dropping out of community colleges? Again we  
22 don't have any data this is totally an estimate,  
23 very wild estimate, and I am very cautious to do  
24 that. But I suspect that the finances would have  
25 a tremendous impact on students dropping out. It

2 has been proven for example there was a study that  
3 was done in Louisiana where students were given a  
4 scholarship. Community college students given a  
5 scholarship regardless of where they were. And  
6 the idea of getting a scholarship. The idea of  
7 getting some support, the idea of someone telling  
8 you that they care about you increased the  
9 percentage of graduation of that population  
10 significantly. So event though I don't have the  
11 figures, I can't give you the figures. It would  
12 be I think irresponsible I think to come up with a  
13 figure of thin air. I believe in my heart that  
14 one of the major factors for dropping out as an  
15 undocumented student is the finance.

16 MS. RABB: And I think we can't  
17 really collect those statistics because it's just  
18 the welcoming environment that we create at CUNY  
19 where we're not asking questions that makes it  
20 impossible to really track and when we find out  
21 about the students is at that crisis moment. They  
22 don't have the money to stay in school. We should  
23 be giving them a job. We should be able to get a  
24 scholarship and we are powerless to help them.

25 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Is there

2 services at CUNY to help undocumented students?

3 MR. MARTINE: Yes, and I think that  
4 Allan you can speak to that. I can tell you from  
5 my experience at my former college. We did have  
6 an office, we had attorneys on staff that helped  
7 students with their undocumented status. We  
8 obviously are blind to their status and more  
9 importantly the foundation of Queensborough  
10 Community College provides scholarships on a merit  
11 basis only. So we do not ask if the students has  
12 legal status or not.

13 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: But at CUNY,  
14 there is not a particular office that a student  
15 they know that that office is there to provide—

16 MR. WARNICK: What council member,  
17 what we at the Citizenship Now, first of all we  
18 have a liaison at every campus, we have nine  
19 different locations throughout the city we're  
20 providing services. All but one is campus based  
21 and which is the one at Washington Heights at CUNY  
22 Express. And we make it known to all the students  
23 in the University who are immigrants, documented  
24 or not that we do have legal services available.  
25 If people can qualify for some benefit we assist

2 them. Occasionally we intervene on their behalf  
3 if there is some confusion about for instance if  
4 there's some tuition issue. Of course there are  
5 some counselors that are trained to know to charge  
6 only the lower tuition for undocumented students  
7 who meet the requirements but sometimes a  
8 particular student may need some advocacy and we  
9 provide that through our centers. So in terms of  
10 legal issues, we're there for them. In terms of,  
11 as Vice Chancellor Martine just mentioned, many of  
12 our colleges do have financial aid programs and  
13 what we do at our centers we send people to those  
14 colleges and try to help them access whatever  
15 private financial aid might be available.

16 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: My last  
17 comment before we call on my colleague Jumaane  
18 Williams is that we have to, and we know that we  
19 are together in our efforts to get the Dream Act  
20 passed in this city but also that we need to look  
21 at the difference of other services go can we  
22 bring to undocumented students at CUNY because I  
23 have seen, I can tell you like I have a good  
24 relation with my student who graduated from  
25 Luperone and I can tell you that being an

2 undocumented students if one of the many reasons  
3 why many of our students drop out from CUNY. It's  
4 because they cannot afford to pay the tuition. So  
5 now we would like to call on council member  
6 Jumaane Williams.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you  
8 Mr. Chair. I am going to be very brief, I just  
9 want to say I was a public school baby from pr-  
10 school to masters. I got my Master's undergrad at  
11 Brooklyn College CUNY and I'm very proud that CUNY  
12 has taken the forefront on this issue and I love  
13 reading the columns by Mr. Warnick and I have to  
14 give a shout out to Bonnie Pagliato from Brooklyn  
15 College represented here. Thank you very much.  
16 This is a very important issue and it affects CUNY  
17 students and I'm very proud that CUNY is in the  
18 forefront. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Council  
20 member Julissa Ferreras.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER FERERRAS: Good  
22 afternoon, almost. I just want to commend again  
23 as our colleagues have mentioned, commend CUNY for  
24 really taking a leadership role on these  
25 immigration issues for many of your students.

2 CUNY has done an incredible job going beyond the  
3 students and really working with families and the  
4 work that you have done with immigration and  
5 through Citizenship Now has really helped not just  
6 students of CUNY but also their families and I  
7 just wanted to make mention and commend you Walter  
8 for your testimony and I think that there was  
9 something that touched me in your testimony was  
10 you stating that you feel safer now because of  
11 your U Visa and some people may not know that I  
12 was a big proponent of asking the Commissioner to  
13 expedite the U Visa process for victims of  
14 domestic violence. And I think that the United  
15 States and New York State and New York City should  
16 not be a place where any human being has to be a  
17 victim of any type of assault or victim of a crime  
18 so that they could feel safe. And I commend you  
19 for testifying for coming here and expressing that  
20 you now feel safe and you feel that you won't be  
21 deported but you really put your life on the line  
22 so that you could have that status. So I'm glad  
23 that you're protected under the U Visa, that's  
24 what the law is for. But I want to really express  
25 that no immigrant should have to be a victim of a



2 crime so that he won't be deported. He/She.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very  
5 much council member Ferreras and the panel. I  
6 also want to mention that we are joined by council  
7 member Gail Brewer from Manhattan. Thank you  
8 council member and I want to call up the next  
9 panel and before I do though I just want to say  
10 that we have to turn this hearing room over to  
11 another hearing at 1:00 so I'm going to have to  
12 hold everybody to the 3 minute rule. I hate to be  
13 the bad guy but that's part of my role I guess.  
14 So with that I would like to bring up Brian Brown  
15 from St. John's University, Christine Shakespeare  
16 from Pace University, Arthur Rhine De Sola from  
17 the Professional Staff Congress, and Leslie  
18 Messiah from Government Relations at Fordham  
19 University. Mr. Brown, would you like to start?

20 BRIAN BROWN: Good morning and my  
21 name is Brian Brown. I am the assistant Vice  
22 President for Government Relations at St. John's  
23 University, a University founded by the Vincentian  
24 community in 1870 and charged by the first Bishop  
25 of Brooklyn to be a place of educational

2 opportunity for immigrants and the children of  
3 immigrants. 140 years later that founding mission  
4 endures at St. John's. I'm here today to help  
5 answer the question how may the Dream Act benefit  
6 immigrant students in New York City. The short  
7 answer to that question is the Dream Act will not  
8 only benefit students in New York City but will  
9 help provide economic activity for the city, U.S.  
10 society as a whole. The Dream Act is so very  
11 necessary because right now immigrant students  
12 graduating from high school in the United States  
13 have virtually no options. Legally they cannot  
14 get a job, they cannot serve in the armed forces,  
15 and most cannot further their education by  
16 attending college. The Dream Act gives these  
17 individuals who have the misfortune of deriving  
18 their undocumented status from their parents  
19 greater opportunities if they attend college or  
20 join the military.

21 It's no secret that in Higher  
22 Education, the more you learn, the more you earn.  
23 According to the College Board, the typical full  
24 time year round worker with a four year college  
25 degree earns more than 60% more than high school

2 graduates over their working lives. Those with  
3 Master's degrees earn almost twice as much and  
4 those with professional degrees almost three times  
5 as much. If legalized the Dream Act would give  
6 beneficiaries access to greater education  
7 opportunities and better jobs which in turns means  
8 a higher standard of living and more taxable  
9 income thus benefitting our economy.

10 The Dream Act is also a way to  
11 tracks to college students in New York City. New  
12 York City is already a major destination for  
13 students pursuing their education. The Dream Act  
14 will attract a greater number of diverse students  
15 to come and further their education. The Dream  
16 Act will also help to keep talented students  
17 living working and studying here in New York City.  
18 The Dream Act is also a way to collect a return on  
19 our educational investments. The students who  
20 have benefited under the Dream Act have been  
21 raised and educated in the United States. State  
22 and local tax payers have already invested in  
23 their education of these children at the  
24 elementary and secondary level. Tax payers  
25 deserve to get a better return on their investment

2 by allowing these individuals best opportunities  
3 to live and work to their greatest potential. The  
4 Dream Act is also a way to reduce high school  
5 dropouts in New York City. In the United States  
6 over 7,000 students drop out of school every day.  
7 That astonishing figure translates to 1.2 million  
8 students dropping out before they graduate. When  
9 students drop out of school they do so at great  
10 cost to themselves and to their communities.  
11 Imagine the lost economic benefits and  
12 opportunities that are lost right here because  
13 undocumented students see no hope for advancing  
14 their education.

15 The Dream Act will help New York  
16 City and our work force better compete in a  
17 globalized world. We need more bi-lingual and bi-  
18 cultural folks in the workforce. Many of these  
19 talented individuals are right here in New York  
20 City and they're ready willing and able to join  
21 our work force. The Dream Act is also about  
22 equality of opportunity. It ensures no child in  
23 America is denied a dream of having a better life.

24 At St, John's we are proud to have a  
25 rich tradition of religious, ethnic and racial

2 diversity that's part of our legacy of New York  
3 City. Our current enrollment has students from 46  
4 states and 111 countries. Yet despite this  
5 tremendous diversity we know that many individuals  
6 who were born into the wrong immigration status  
7 remain outside of our gates and outside of our  
8 reach. Together let us extend a hand and work to  
9 make their dreams come true.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Ms.  
11 Messiah.

12 MS. MESSIAH: Good afternoon. My  
13 name is Leslie Messiah I am the Assistant Vice  
14 President for Government Relations and State  
15 Affairs at Fordham University. Since 1841 Fordham  
16 University with our campuses of course in Bronx  
17 and Manhattan has been one of the entry points for  
18 new immigrants. It was founded on the notion that  
19 immigrants incoming to this country have an  
20 opportunity to contribute but more importantly  
21 their immigrant status ought not be a deterrent  
22 for moving forward in this society. And as we  
23 recognize the immigration movement has evolved and  
24 has moved on to become the newest civil rights  
25 issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

2 I will make my remarks to something  
3 very different. We recognize the importance of  
4 the Dream Act and we also recognize that without  
5 the Dream Act many of our students would not be  
6 able to move forward in this society. But you  
7 cannot put the, if you will, your hand in one  
8 section of the pond thinking that will affect one  
9 type of student and not thinking that it's going  
10 to affect another type of student. Higher  
11 Education institutions within New York City in  
12 particular have been asked to take on more  
13 responsibilities. For example at Fordham  
14 University not only do we have our mentoring  
15 Latinos Programs that take place in area high  
16 schools in the Bronx, our law school is now  
17 responsible for having one of the largest  
18 international law clinic in the country which  
19 deals with issues of immigration and Visa issues.  
20 With that said, when we're dealing with a student  
21 who is an immigrant, who may not have access to  
22 regular financial aid benefits, it means that the  
23 institution itself must come together and find the  
24 resources to keep that student there. I'm sure  
25 that many of the college presidents in New York

2 City can talk to the fact of dealing with very  
3 talented students who because they don't have the  
4 financial resources the institution now becomes  
5 responsible for doing that.

6 With this said, I would say that  
7 just because the Dream Act did not come true for  
8 this term, that does not aggregate our  
9 responsibility in ensuring that other forms of  
10 financial aid, whether it's the Tuition Assistance  
11 Program in New York State, the Higher Education  
12 Opportunity Program, STEP, or CSTEP, the  
13 Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program,  
14 programs which deal specifically with bringing  
15 students of color as well as immigrant status if  
16 you continue to fund those programs at the current  
17 levels including Pell it makes it difficult for  
18 our institution and institutions like us to ensure  
19 that students who need financial aid regardless of  
20 their immigrant status actually gets it.

21 We are in definite support of the  
22 Dream Act. We know that it is important and we  
23 will do everything possible to fight for it at the  
24 end of Fordham University status but we ask that  
25 just because it did not come true, that does not

2 aggregate the city council, the Congress, as well  
3 as the Senate for making sure that all students  
4 get the kind of financial aid that they need in  
5 order to succeed in this society. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Ms.  
7 Shakespeare.

8 CHRISTINE SHAKESPEARE: Good  
9 afternoon. It's officially the afternoon. I'm  
10 here to testify here today. My name is Christine  
11 Shakespeare and I'm the Assistant Provost for  
12 Student Success at Pace University. I'm  
13 addressing you today on behalf of Pace University  
14 and its students who would benefit from your  
15 support and are benefitting from your support of  
16 the Dream Act. Pace University is an urban higher  
17 education institution with locations on  
18 Westchester and downtown New York. We enroll  
19 approximately 1000 grad and undergrad students who  
20 come to Pace with a strong desire to take their  
21 place in the world however best achieved following  
22 their educational experience at Pace. One of the  
23 hallmarks of our education is an award winning  
24 cooperative education program where students  
25 receive unusual opportunities to take internships,



2 residencies, and part time jobs in partnership  
3 with their in classroom experiences. Graduates of  
4 Pace University are some of the highest paid  
5 graduates in the country and they enter careers in  
6 industries deemed high need by the U.S. government  
7 or they pursue higher education at the graduate  
8 level. Undocumented applicants at Pace are  
9 treated the same way as other applicants in so far  
10 as admissions is concerned. Most end up being  
11 categorized as international students because they  
12 are neither U.S. citizens or U.S. permanent  
13 residents. They are offered scholarships based on  
14 the same criteria as any other applicant. But  
15 they don't usually file for the federal or state  
16 financial aid because they are not eligible. It  
17 becomes clear to us that when an applicant is  
18 undocumented we then change their status from  
19 international to standard status.

20                   These students are welcome to attend  
21 Pace and they do of course many of them struggle  
22 to pay tuition because they have no access to the  
23 government grants or loans. It's one of the  
24 saddest results in my opinion that the current  
25 immigration policies leave so many children who've

2 been raised in this country and who want to get a  
3 higher education degree but even if they can  
4 afford a higher education degree they hit the  
5 brick wall when it comes to be able to work  
6 lawfully. Many of the students don't seem to  
7 really understand nor do their parents until they  
8 are actually going through their process of  
9 applying and being accepted and figuring out the  
10 whole financial aid scenario the situation that  
11 they face if they want to pursue higher education.  
12 And last year one of our Pace University high  
13 school seniors was offered the Pace high school  
14 scholarship which covers full tuition between  
15 federal and state aid. She couldn't accept the  
16 scholarship because she couldn't file the FAFSA  
17 and there's also a lot of private types of  
18 financial aid that are afforded to students but  
19 they always require that you to file the FASA. So  
20 eventually in the process of working with the  
21 student she told this story that she couldn't talk  
22 about it with her parents because it was not  
23 something that was a comfortable topic and she  
24 ended up not attending Pace University.

25 Pace University supports the Dream

2 Act. Your support of the Dream Act will help so  
3 many of the students who graduate high school and  
4 who have little hope for the future. The Dream  
5 Act will assist these students qualify for jobs  
6 and resident status so that they can continue to  
7 provide their talents to the United States, the  
8 country they call home. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON DRUM: Thank you very  
10 much. Ms. DeSoto.

11 MS. DESOTO: Good afternoon Chairman  
12 Ydanis Rodriguez and Daniel Dromm and  
13 distinguished members of the Higher Education and  
14 Immigration committees. I wish to thank you for  
15 the opportunity to testify on behalf of the  
16 Professional Staff Congress in support of the city  
17 council resolution number 409a today. Our  
18 committee strongly support the Development Relief  
19 and Education for Alien Minors Act or the Dream  
20 Act. In light of the disappointing procedural  
21 vote in the Senate yesterday to block the bill we  
22 urge that you adopt this resolution as soon as  
23 possible. Our New York State senators  
24 representatives and the Congress need to know that  
25 New York City supports this reform. The Dream Act

2 would provide a path for undocumented youth who  
3 were brought to the United States as minors to  
4 obtain legal immigration status. Passing the  
5 Dream Act would be an important first step towards  
6 comprehensive immigration reform which our country  
7 desperately needs. I'm especially happy to be  
8 here today with CUNY students and immigrants  
9 rights organizations to urge this swift adoption.

10 Our union represents 24,00 CUNY  
11 faculty and professional staff who know first hand  
12 the particular hurdle facing undocumented  
13 immigrant students struggling to complete their  
14 education and find legal employment. Several  
15 years ago New York State passed a law granting  
16 undocumented students who graduate from high  
17 school here the right to attend CUNY and pay in-  
18 state tuition rates. This legislation which our  
19 union strongly advocated has since 2001 opened the  
20 doors to college education for thousands of  
21 talented young people who would otherwise have  
22 been denied. Today over 44% of all CUNY students  
23 were born outside of the United States mainland.  
24 While this figure includes students on many  
25 temporary visas as well as permanent residents

2 some are undocumented immigrants who currently  
3 have no means to obtain permanent legal status  
4 ever. These students live under a constant threat  
5 of deportation. They cannot work legally, obtain  
6 a driver's license or open a bank account.  
7 Despite their talent, perseverance and desire for  
8 building a better life for themselves, their  
9 families, and community they are stuck in limbo  
10 with no path forward. The Dream Act would rectify  
11 this injustice by granting those who were brought  
12 to the United States before age 15 and graduate  
13 high school provisional legal status for 6 years.  
14 If they then completed two years of college or  
15 served for two years in the U.S. military they  
16 would be able to apply for regular permanent  
17 status.

18 As a counselor at Queensborough  
19 community college for many years and now as an  
20 elected officer of the PSC I witnessed immigrant  
21 students struggle to complete college education on  
22 many different levels. I know them to be hungry  
23 for a college education. Like CUNY students they  
24 come from a families of very modest means but  
25 unlike CUNY students who are citizens or legal

2 students these students cannot receive federal or  
3 state financial aid or qualify for subsidized  
4 educational loans. For this reason many work long  
5 hours under the table and frequently take time  
6 from school in order to have enough money to pay  
7 for next semester's tuition fees. Though the  
8 Dream Act itself would not fix this problem  
9 entirely it would allow New York State to provide  
10 TAP grants to these students should it choose to  
11 do so. Passing the Dream Act would also remove  
12 the penalty of the State by section 505 of the  
13 illegal immigration reform and immigration  
14 responsibility act of 1996.

15 If given the opportunity we are  
16 confident that these young immigrant students will  
17 use their college education to contribute to New  
18 York's future economy as productive workers and  
19 professionals. For these reasons we of the  
20 Professional Staff Congress recommend ourselves to  
21 push the U.S. Congress to pass the Dream Act into  
22 law. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with  
23 you on this important resolution.

24 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. I  
25 have a question to this panel and I agree with the

2 representative from Fordham University that we  
3 have to work hard to get the Dream Act passed but  
4 we don't have to wait. We cannot wait. We going  
5 to Washington DC on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. We will mobilize  
6 the nation and march for jobs and immigration  
7 reform. We hope that we will be able to put the  
8 pressure to see the Dream Act a reality but for  
9 the meanwhile we also have to take responsibility.  
10 In listening to Ms. Shakespeare when she shared a  
11 story about that particular student very qualified  
12 to be at Pace however she was not able to attend  
13 it. It make me to believe that at Pace they don't  
14 have any program, right to help undocumented  
15 students to pay for the tuition?

16 MS. SHAKESPEARE: No, we have the  
17 typical financial aid packages that are  
18 supplemented with federal and state aid so there's  
19 no scholarships particularly geared towards those  
20 students.

21 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Have you  
22 thought about it? Have you had any discussion  
23 about bringing any program to help a student who  
24 are in that situation who are undocumented as CUNY  
25 does?

2 MS. SHAKESPEARE: Absolutely, we  
3 would like to help all our students be able to  
4 afford our tuition more but we've looked at that  
5 as well as other students who don't qualify for  
6 aid for various reasons or whose parents aren't  
7 able to take out some of the loans that usually  
8 supplement the packages. So yes, we have but we  
9 have not implemented anything.

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And that's  
11 my, I don't know if Fordham has any program that's  
12 specifically to help undocumented students who pay  
13 for the tuition if because of legal status they  
14 cannot afford to get the financial aid.

15 MS. MESSIAH: Well to be honest with  
16 you on determining undocumented students that  
17 tends to come from anecdotal information. Meaning  
18 that chances are when students apply to come to  
19 Fordham as well as most other institutions 9 times  
20 out of 10 they are not going to say they are  
21 undocumented. So by the time they've already come  
22 into the institution and have gone through the  
23 financial paces it is always generally through a  
24 situation. It is one, speaking with a professor  
25 talking about the fact they were having problems



2 or they're dealing with a counselor to whom they  
3 feel rather close. The idea of mentioning one's  
4 documented status is based on fear and with that  
5 said, to be able to put together a program that is  
6 based on anecdotal evidence is rather difficult so  
7 what we tend to do as we do have a generalized  
8 financial aid pool.

9 We also provide opportunities for  
10 students regardless of financial status. Fordham,  
11 90% of our students are on some form of financial  
12 aid. Of those students who do not qualify for  
13 federal or state aid the university itself then  
14 comes together and puts together a package for  
15 that student. That's why I think it's so  
16 important that I mention that when you put  
17 together these packages regardless of immigrant  
18 status if a student cannot get access to federal  
19 or state financial aid the institution has to do  
20 it and there's almost a robbing Peter to pay Paul  
21 syndrome that happens. So for example if you have  
22 a New York State student who is a resident and  
23 they are not getting sufficient TAP or PELL or  
24 whatever grant opportunities they should have been  
25 made available it makes it difficult not only for

2 that student to be fully funded you also have to  
3 take into consideration those other students who  
4 may not just generally qualify for that regardless  
5 of their immigration status. So in answer to that  
6 question it would be difficult to create a program  
7 specifically for undocumented students because  
8 they don't always report.

9 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I agree that  
10 they don't and I can tell you that in fourteen  
11 years I wasn't only a teacher I only did a lot of  
12 work as counselor at my school so but I also know  
13 that the cases of Luperone where I used to teach  
14 high school where we had a voluntary student that  
15 they are in that situation they don't have their  
16 own document I think that I hope if both  
17 institutions, I don't say that you're not doing  
18 that but you are a little bit more aggressive like  
19 being in touch with that school and find a way to  
20 also help those students that are undocumented.  
21 That they have the grade to graduated from your  
22 institution.

23 MR. WARNICK: And I think that the  
24 common theme that you are hearing is that this is  
25 already occurring in the private sector in terms

2 of private colleges and universities. Most  
3 students attending a private college are not  
4 paying the sticker price. There's a tremendous  
5 amount of discounting involved whether it's on the  
6 institution's behalf or as a result of state and  
7 federal financial aid but in the absence of the  
8 student's filling out the FAFSA form, the Federal  
9 financial aid form, there's just so much unmet  
10 need it's hard to close the gap.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you and  
12 council member Brewer has some questions.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you  
14 very much. I even have a young person living with  
15 me in the INS who can't figure out if he's a  
16 resident or not so you never know. They're  
17 totally befuddled so right now he's not. So the  
18 question that I have is in addition to the amazing  
19 packages that you are trying to put together do  
20 the private institutions maybe sit down with  
21 Google or Microsoft or some of these larger  
22 companies and say you know we have this issue we  
23 would like to work with you. In other words is  
24 there any coming together with the private  
25 institutions and CUNY to try to think of other

2 scholarship opportunities because god know these  
3 companies and many others need this amazing  
4 workforce in the future so I was just wondering if  
5 that kind of coming together is something that,  
6 the city should help you with or have you at least  
7 considered it?

8 MS. MESSIAH: At least in terms of  
9 Fordham our entire development office has now  
10 become a good substantial part of that has been  
11 geared for doing the kinds of things that you are  
12 talking about. For example, one of the programs  
13 that we have I mentioned earlier called the  
14 Mentoring Latinos program. It's a program that's  
15 specifically designed to work with immigrant girls  
16 in area schools particularly of those of Puerto  
17 Rican or Latino descent because we find that those  
18 girls in terms of their immigrant status have a  
19 very hard time not only getting into colleges or  
20 universities but because of cultural or economic  
21 issues.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Not Puerto  
23 Rican but everything else.

24 MS. MESSIAH: Everything else. But  
25 many times they have the reticence of applying to

2 colleges and universities are looking beyond that.  
3 So many times in the instance of this particular  
4 program we've actually reached out to finally to  
5 Microsoft which was a very big proponent but a lot  
6 of our alumni, one of the great things about our  
7 alumni pool is that you have people who come from  
8 those similar backgrounds and due to their own  
9 experiences actually help contribute for the  
10 development of those kinds of programs. So in  
11 short answer to your question, yes we do. Do they  
12 do enough? Of course not, and we would love for  
13 them to do more.

14 MR. WARNICK: I just think as a  
15 sector there already is a collaborative effort to  
16 try to raise awareness and advocacy in terms of  
17 that unmet financial need and I think what goes on  
18 at every campus is development office or  
19 institutional advancement office is these efforts  
20 that have been described to try to raise more  
21 private dollars whether it's alumni or corporate  
22 dollars to help support student financial aid  
23 packages.

24 MS. RABB: At the City University of  
25 New York while I cannot speak to all campuses but

2 at Queensborough Community College the campus that  
3 I'm affiliated with we have annual fundraising  
4 drives, Partners for Progress but we do reach out  
5 to the corporate sectors asking them to donate and  
6 they do.

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Anyway I can  
8 say that we have a lot of support for CUNY when  
9 there is a student that we know that they have a  
10 strong academic record and they can graduate from  
11 the institution and then finding a way of how to  
12 enroll those students at CUNY so that's exactly  
13 what I also looking for to establish that level of  
14 collaboration that if we identify in a student  
15 that we know if a strong candidate to graduate to  
16 find a way to help the student to get the tuition  
17 paid from your institutions.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you and  
19 thank you to the panel I appreciate you coming in  
20 and staying with us. I would like to call up our  
21 next panel, Francisco Corielle from Make the Road,  
22 Raisa Fideli, Sylvia Gonzalez from the New York  
23 Immigration Coalition, and Amy Traub from the Drum  
24 Major institute. Let's start on the left.

25 RAISA FIDELI: Great, thank you. I

2 would like to begin by thanking the committees on  
3 Immigration and Education for the opportunity to  
4 testify before you today. I would also like to  
5 especially acknowledge council member Dromm for  
6 inviting me to speak today. My name is Raisa  
7 Fideli, I am currently a pre-engineering student  
8 at City College. And it is my honor to speak  
9 before you on behalf of undocumented students  
10 struggling for legalization and higher education.  
11 Some would say that yesterday's defense bill was a  
12 loss. This is not the case however. If anything  
13 this past week revealed just how critical this  
14 piece of legislation is and how dedicated dreamers  
15 are to making it a reality.

16 I would like to share my personal  
17 story with everyone in the room as Walter did  
18 earlier. At the age of five a life altering  
19 decision was made on my behalf. I was brought to  
20 the United States illegally, practically smuggled  
21 in without a Visa under my name so I'm pretty much  
22 here not under a Visa which is a lot more  
23 difficult than someone who entered under their own  
24 name with a Visa. I did not know until I was high  
25 school that I was a undocumented student and the

2 extent of my immigration status. Almost 20 years  
3 later I am still undocumented. I am 24 years old  
4 and despite these challenges I have continued to  
5 pursue my education. Why is it that after 20  
6 years in this country I am still undocumented?  
7 Well, it's because of the 1996 Illegal Immigration  
8 Reform Act which states that anyone who entered  
9 the country illegally can never adjust their  
10 status. That is unless of course they are caught  
11 and going through the procedures meaning they are  
12 caught or they open themselves up to the system  
13 and they are married and they could prove that if  
14 they get deported they would suffer hardship or if  
15 they are a victim of domestic violence. Or  
16 another option would be you know as I said going  
17 through a deportation process and having a judge  
18 sympathize with you.

19 Many people say I don't look or  
20 sound like an immigrant. And to that I would  
21 always say that there is not a singular look or  
22 sound to an undocumented immigrant. What does  
23 being undocumented mean? It means not having  
24 access to the same resources and opportunities as  
25 your peers even if you're more qualified. It



2 means paying for school out of pocket if you're  
3 not lucky enough to find a rare scholarship for  
4 which you qualify. It means not being able to  
5 travel or positively contribute your skills to the  
6 city, the nation, and the world. In essence it  
7 means living in the shadows of American society  
8 and in the shadows of education. Despite the  
9 myths out there we are not criminals or thieves or  
10 a burden to society. Furthermore, I am not an  
11 illegal human being or an illegal alien. What I  
12 am is a proud New Yorker and a citizen of the  
13 world. In fact I know more about New York and its  
14 inner workings than the people who were born and  
15 raised in New York.

16 I would like to thank the city and  
17 its representatives at all levels for  
18 acknowledging the importance of New York City's  
19 immigrant population and our significance as an  
20 asset. If New York City abandons us it loses  
21 leaders, teachers, civil service workers, nurses,  
22 doctors, lawyers, engineers you name it. So  
23 resolution 409a is an acknowledgment to our  
24 importance our significance to New York City and  
25 the nation as a whole. Instead of importing

2 workers from around the world why not harness a  
3 willing and able workforce bred right here in the  
4 United States. It is sad to see a society willing  
5 to turn its back on those who could benefit it.  
6 Those who could plead it with substance despite  
7 the fact that they are already Americans. There  
8 are a multitude of socioeconomic benefits of the  
9 Dream Act, too many in fact to list in this brief  
10 statement. So I would like to end this statement  
11 by thanking you all for having this critical forum  
12 today and also by stating that my statement is  
13 made in loving memory of Cynthia Feliz and Tam  
14 Tran, to undocumented dreamers who were killed  
15 earlier this year and unfortunately because of  
16 their passing they were not able to live their  
17 lives. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very  
19 much and for your courage in coming here today.

20 SYLVIA GONZALEZ: Thank you very  
21 much Chairman Dromm and Chairman Rodriguez,  
22 members of the committee on Immigration and  
23 committee on Higher Education. My name is Sylvia  
24 Gonzalez and I am happy to submit my testimony on  
25 behalf of the New York Immigration Coalition for

2 the record and how the Dream Act could benefit  
3 immigrant students in New York City. The New York  
4 Immigration Coalition is an umbrella policy  
5 advocacy organization for more than 200 groups  
6 that work with immigrant and refugees serving one  
7 of the largest and diverse newcomer populations in  
8 the United States. The NYIC has become a leading  
9 advocate for immigrant communities on local state  
10 and national levels. While my remarks will focus  
11 on how the Dream Act could help the students in  
12 New York city I must respond to the Senate failure  
13 to move the bill forward as we saw yesterday's  
14 vote.

15 The Congress chose to stop the Dream  
16 Act from moving to the floor in the Senate for a  
17 vote dashing the hopes of some 800,000 young and -  
18 - of the nation. Those who voted no largely to  
19 hide behind spurred objections to the process and  
20 made it plain that the immigrants will continue to  
21 be exploited as a wage issue in an ugly and angry  
22 electoral season. We are disappointed at the  
23 continuing paralysis at the federal level deeply  
24 saddened and plain fed up with politicians who  
25 squander a precious opportunity to make real

2 movement towards substantial solutions. There is  
3 deep city support for the Dream Act from President  
4 Obama to Colin Powell from the young people whose  
5 futures depend on the Dream Act to thousands upon  
6 thousand of people from all sectors and walks of  
7 life.

8 We may have lost this particular  
9 vote at the moment in time but in just the past  
10 week those striving for immigration reform  
11 including the Dream Act and other productive  
12 common sense measures floated the Senate offices  
13 with 140,000 calls and faxes representing an  
14 unstoppable grassroots movement.

15 The Dream Act deserves a fair  
16 hearing on the floor of the Senate and a vote of  
17 the system this year. This passion that drove  
18 this intensive effort to continue to build and - -  
19 us and it will prevail. The New York Immigration  
20 Coalition promotes realistic and sensible reforms  
21 to our immigration system and the Dream Act is one  
22 of the positive pieces we need to do so. The  
23 Dream Act will give thousands of students the  
24 opportunity to pursue higher education entrance  
25 and position into higher education and careers.

2 By passing it Congress will be making a tremendous  
3 investment in the future. New York City has many  
4 intelligent and dedicated hard working students  
5 who will greatly benefit from the Dream Act. With  
6 legal status such immigrant students can restore  
7 confidence and develop stability in their lives.  
8 With eventual permanent status new doors to  
9 educational and professional opportunities will  
10 open for them and ultimately citizenship they will  
11 be fully able to engage in civil life.

12 Additionally the Dream Act will  
13 grant self assurance and optimism for the high  
14 school students as the chance to go to college  
15 will finally be within their reach. With such  
16 helpfulness they will be motivated and dedicated  
17 to the studying and get involved in their  
18 activities. As a result we anticipate increased  
19 attendance and possible increased school  
20 performance instead of fostering continued despair  
21 among immigrant youth. Congress should pass the  
22 Dream Act to have a life altering impact on  
23 qualified students. Thank you again for the  
24 opportunity to express our views regarding today's  
25 hearing.

2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Ms.  
3 Traub.

4 AMY TRAUB: Good afternoon. My name  
5 is Amy Traub and I'm the Director of Research at  
6 the Drum Major institute for Public Policy. We're  
7 a non-partisan think tank based here in New York  
8 City. For many years the Drum Major Institute has  
9 analyzed immigration policy according to the  
10 interests of America's current and aspiring middle  
11 class. Our research concludes that providing a  
12 path to legal status for all currently  
13 unauthorized immigrants would benefits the  
14 nation's middle class and also Americans striving  
15 to earn a middle class standard of living. But if  
16 political realities prevent timely passage of the  
17 immigrant overhaul that the nation really needs  
18 Congress and the President must at the minimum  
19 pass the Dream Act allowing unauthorized immigrant  
20 students who migrated to the U.S. as children to  
21 further their education, get better jobs, and as a  
22 result also pay more in taxes.

23 Accordingly, I urge the entire city  
24 council to pass resolution 409a in favor of the  
25 Dream Act. I will outline three ways the Dram Act

2 will help to strengthen and expand the middle  
3 class here in New York City and beyond. And I've  
4 also provided a policy brief with my testimony  
5 which explores all of this in more detail. First,  
6 the Dream Act will enable unauthorized immigrant  
7 students to contribute more to the economic  
8 prosperity necessary to sustain a strong middle  
9 class providing students with legal immigration  
10 status would enable them to access higher  
11 education, get higher paying jobs and as a result  
12 pay higher taxes. A 30 year old Mexican immigrant  
13 woman with a college degree will pay for example  
14 5,300 dollars more in taxes and cost 3,900 dollars  
15 less in government expenses each year compared to  
16 a high school drop out with similar  
17 characteristics and that's according to a Rand  
18 corporation study. If all you care about is the  
19 bottom line of government this is a very wise bill  
20 to pass.

21 By opening up legitimate work  
22 opportunities to immigrant youth the Dream Act  
23 will keep unauthorized immigrants out of the  
24 underground economy where they face exploitation  
25 that threatens to - - and wages and working

2 conditions of aspiring middle class Americans.  
3 Research suggests that unauthorized immigrant  
4 workers routinely face violations of the minimum  
5 wage, overtime and work place safety laws and that  
6 the exploitation of immigrants goes hand in hand  
7 with an atmosphere in which citizens are also  
8 taken advantage of on the job. Finally the Dream  
9 Act will facilitate the economic integration of  
10 immigrant families. Today's immigrants are our  
11 future middle class. The students affected by the  
12 legislation grew up in the United States, attended  
13 our schools, speak English, adopted American  
14 values and traditions and know this country as  
15 their home. They often have siblings and other  
16 close relatives who are already U.S. citizens.  
17 Continuing to marginalize these deeply rooted  
18 people cuts a permanent section off from the  
19 American dream. The Dream Act is good policy for  
20 New York's middle class and the nations. I urge  
21 the city council to pass this resolution and join  
22 the chorus of voices calling on Congress and the  
23 President to enact this critical law. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very  
25 much. Mr. Corielle?



2 FRANCISCO CORIELLE: Good afternoon  
3 my name is Francisco Corielle. I'm a senior  
4 attending American International High School. I'm  
5 first generation in that school it's a new school  
6 which is for newcomers if you had three years or  
7 less in this country. That's a school basically  
8 of Latino students who don't speak English and  
9 also I am a group leader of Make the Road NY which  
10 is a non profit organization. I want to talk a  
11 little bit about my story.

12 I came to this country when I was  
13 15, my mom called me and my mom came to this  
14 country about 7 years ago. She just called me to  
15 come to the United States in a away to get a  
16 better future or better education. I didn't want  
17 to come I was training for a professional soccer  
18 club but I didn't want to come but family's first  
19 with everything. When I came to NYC I see a lot  
20 of professional people running to work and I  
21 realized that if you study you can have a better  
22 future but my mom didn't tell me if you're an  
23 undocumented student you cant go to college. How  
24 can I get an education, how can I be a  
25 professional, how can I contribute to this country

2 if I don't get a high education? High school is  
3 not enough to contribute to this country.

4 Now I'm a senior and all of my  
5 friends started to tell me, oh what college or  
6 university are you going? And I just have to  
7 answer I don't know yet because I'm and  
8 undocumented student and I can't get financial aid  
9 and I won't have the opportunity to go to college  
10 and be the first generation in my family to study.  
11 I came illegally with my little sister at the age  
12 of she was 8, and I was 15. I start school and I  
13 always try my best and I went to Make the Road NY  
14 and I start working as a volunteer working with  
15 youths making workshops, campaign, rally,  
16 organizing people and I have been fighting for the  
17 Dream Act a long time. Last summer I was in  
18 Washington DC, I was at - - University fighting,  
19 putting pressure or calling to the Congress to  
20 pass the Dream Act as a law. And I just want to  
21 say that it's easy to say 2.1 million undocumented  
22 students but it's hard to see 2.1 million  
23 undocumented students who can't continue their  
24 dreams with their education. Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I just want

2 to share with Francisco that I came to this  
3 country when I was 18. 1983. I used to wash  
4 dishes at the Twin Towers 93<sup>rd</sup> Floor. And many  
5 times I walked from City College, 137th to Dykman  
6 because I didn't have the money to pay my fare and  
7 went to City College dropping at taxes at night  
8 and taking classes by day. And I was a student  
9 organizer at CUNY so as I did it that I graduated  
10 from City College I became a teacher for fourteen  
11 years, and I'm here today. Regardless we have to  
12 keep pushing for the Dream Act but getting your BA  
13 your Master's degree or your Phd is something that  
14 you have to do because people like us that belong  
15 to poor community we don't have choices. We have  
16 to graduate.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And I couldn't  
18 agree more. I just want to thank all the  
19 advocates particularly Ms. Fideli and Francisco.  
20 I think it puts a human face on why the Dream Act  
21 is so necessary. Thank you very much. And I'd  
22 like to call up now Rudiella Arias from Hazardous  
23 Materials Ground Zero Workers. Anthony Stevens  
24 Acevido and Altagracia Vargas.

25 RUDIELLA ARIAS [VIA INTERPRETER]:

2 Good afternoon everybody, members of the  
3 committee. My name is Rudiella Arias and I  
4 represent the Hazardous Materials Ground Zero  
5 Workers. I was a Ground Zero worker who worked at  
6 the site. I'm here to support the Dream Act and  
7 to urge our leaders and elected officials to  
8 support the Dream Act. I have a son who right now  
9 has his hands tied. He cannot go to school, he  
10 cannot work and at this moment I have a big worry  
11 because I don't know how I'm going to help my son  
12 stay away from the streets. We have to make sure  
13 we keep our children away from the streets and we  
14 have to makes sure we keep encouraging them to  
15 find an education and to find a profession that  
16 they are interested in and that they can work. In  
17 my case as well as other co-workers at Ground Zero  
18 having our children be a part of the labor force  
19 will help us as well. I believe that given the  
20 fact that our children have already been educated  
21 they should have the opportunity to go to school  
22 to have a higher education so they could  
23 contribute to this country. This is all I am  
24 going to say and thank you. If I may add I am co-  
25 executive director of the International Center, a

2 non-profit organization in Jackson Heights. We  
3 have been working with the Ground Zero workers for  
4 the past three years to ensure that they have  
5 access to social services but giving the children  
6 the opportunity to be educated to obtain a higher  
7 education degree as well as a work permit will not  
8 only help these children stay away from the  
9 streets but it will help them contribute with  
10 their families. Their parents are really sick and  
11 some of them are dying. They have terminal  
12 illnesses and making sure that these children have  
13 the opportunity to help their parents will also  
14 make sure their parents continue to be alive  
15 because given the severity of their illnesses  
16 their parents cannot work so that means that these  
17 children are being left behind. That means that  
18 sometimes there is no food and because they are  
19 undocumented they cannot access some of the social  
20 services that they need such as financial  
21 assistance housing. So having the Dream Act  
22 passed will allow these children to have a secure  
23 home, to have their parents around and to be  
24 members of this society. Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very

2 much. I don't usually interrupt but I just want  
3 to say thank you for your testimony in particular  
4 because it's very touching and very moving and we  
5 have seen so much unfairness recently in terms of  
6 what Congress has done not only in terms of the  
7 Dream Act but also in terms of what's been done to  
8 undocumented Ground Zero workers as well. [foreign  
9 audio] And now I want to also introduce Anthony  
10 Stevens Acevido because I didn't properly  
11 introduce him before. He is the Assistant  
12 Director of the Dominican Studies program at CUNY.

13 ANTHONY STEVENS ACEVIDO: Good  
14 morning. Thank you very much for the opportunity.  
15 I am indeed the Assistant Director of the CUNY  
16 Dominican Studies program but I must clarify that  
17 I learned about the hearing thanks to a call from  
18 council member Rodriguez's office yesterday. I  
19 just didn't know that the hearing was taking place  
20 so technically speaking I'm not talking formally  
21 on behalf of the institute though I think that  
22 whatever I have to say is pretty much shared by  
23 everyone here but formally I am talking on a very  
24 personal basis. I'm a native New Yorker, I grew  
25 up in the Dominican Republic, I'm a son of

2 immigrants. My father was from - - he came in  
3 1939 as an undocumented immigrant through the  
4 Canadian border. He went through high school and  
5 college and became a citizen therefore the rest of  
6 his life made a great contribution to civic life  
7 specifically in Harlem and throughout New York  
8 City. My mother was a garment industry and she  
9 was a little bit more lucky came with her papers  
10 and everything was sort of okay with her in that  
11 regard. So I'm one of the first generation  
12 members that has had the luxury of not having gone  
13 through the anxieties and injustice and  
14 difficulties as a high school teacher for ten  
15 years in New York City I did witness here in the  
16 city and the Bronx as well as northern Manhattan.  
17 And now as a member of the staff of the city of  
18 the Dominican Studies Institute though we are not  
19 a teaching unit we do have an interaction with a  
20 number of students and I can tell you that both  
21 when I was a teacher for 10 years as well as now  
22 and are in the more higher education environment I  
23 do witness and come across young people who are  
24 extremely promising and yet either have a lot of  
25 difficulty in completing the higher education or

2 have to interrupt the higher education because of  
3 the legal setting that we have. Therefore it has  
4 been repeatedly said here blocks access from  
5 financial assistance or in other places in New  
6 York and then prevent them at all from attending  
7 college. So I'm here to congratulate the city  
8 council of the Immigration committee as well as  
9 the Higher Education committee. By the way I am  
10 extremely happy to see Chairman Rodriguez back at  
11 his seat providing leadership which I hope will  
12 last for many years and to support the bringing  
13 forward of the bill to the entire council  
14 supporting the Dream Act. I can't really think of  
15 any stronger more revealing indicator and  
16 predictor of the willingness of a person to become  
17 an integrated positive system in any society than  
18 trying to achieve higher education or enlisting  
19 his or herself in the armed forces of that given  
20 country. That is to say the fact there is a  
21 number of children of immigrants that still try to  
22 achieve a higher education despite the fact that  
23 they are on the committee and the fact that many  
24 of them do try to serve the nation through  
25 becoming members of the armed forces. I think



2 automatically is saying the level of willingness  
3 and interest that these individuals have to  
4 contribute to this society so the moral point of  
5 view I think that's the basic reason why congress  
6 and President Obama should at some point approve  
7 the Dream Act. And I also think that the passing  
8 of the Dream Act is not only going to have a great  
9 impact on the number of students that is having  
10 extreme difficulty in completing their higher  
11 education. One thing that I think has not been  
12 mentioned is the psychological impact this is  
13 going to have in encouraging those who have not  
14 completed high school yet but who are undocumented  
15 and they do know it that they do have a chance if  
16 the Dream Act is approved. So again  
17 congratulation to the two committees for approving  
18 the legislation and I hope that council at large  
19 does approve it because it's not only fair and  
20 morally justified but I think it's a very wise  
21 policy altogether.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very  
23 much and now we have Altagracias - - .

24 ALTAGRACIAS: Good afternoon  
25 everybody. I've been here because of council from

2 District 10 Ydanis Rodriguez invited me here. I'm  
3 an experienced old lady. I don't want to talk my  
4 story because it might be too long. When I come  
5 to the United States 1954 I did discriminate for I  
6 don't want to say who but I still have that in my  
7 heart. That is the reason why we here to give  
8 opportunity whatever it is that country - - a lot.  
9 But I be proud to say I been in the government  
10 center for 40 longest years doing sewing machine  
11 operator, sample, dressing model without language.  
12 Speaking English and I smart I never go to school  
13 for nothing. Later on what it was my surprise  
14 after I had been in my government center for like  
15 a really person and later in my years old lady 80  
16 year old is proud to say that. I concerned to say  
17 maybe they want to come here for the dream like I  
18 did to like to meet Mr. King say I have a dream I  
19 the dream and I color of my dream be a smart in  
20 the government center and later on don't believe  
21 it maybe I lie but I be proud to say with my  
22 intelligent natural I went to Hollywood for a big  
23 movies. Raising Victor Vargas, I love Huckabees  
24 all these things in my head when I go to school.  
25 Let a chance the people coming in the new

2 generation, maybe you can create a school like art  
3 like I was, make a school that people come from  
4 center through America and the island they smart.  
5 They know how to do and produce like a beautiful  
6 art like me and then I says to them please let her  
7 come in, let her be like a dream like we all want  
8 to dream in the United States. I was born in a  
9 small town in the Dominican Republic. I come in  
10 young I spent all my life here and I be proud to  
11 say God Bless America and God bless everybody  
12 support the education. Education as anything like  
13 I coming and then please be kind with us pray for  
14 that, let it come in. Let her be and then after  
15 that you can put a plaque somewhere and then don't  
16 let her come in anymore. So please let these  
17 people come in. I represent my community as old  
18 lady experience and I be in the community the big  
19 mouth they all know. Politicians want to know  
20 where I be sometimes but I'll be proud to be today  
21 that Council New York and please grandma say that  
22 let the new generation continue in the United  
23 States. [foreign audio] a small town and stay  
24 here I says proud and very proud [foreign audio]  
25 stand up God Bless America. [off mic]

2 Thank you. [foreign audio].

3 This is Altagracias.

4 I just want to say that first of all  
5 I just want to recognize the contribution of the  
6 Dominican Studies institute both Danny and other  
7 council members we were the Museo de Barrio. And  
8 this past week when Supreme Court Sotomayor came  
9 to open exhibition about Latino in New York and as  
10 a Dominican I got to say that I was so proud when  
11 I heard Sotomayor sharing the information to  
12 everybody at the exhibition at the Museo de  
13 Barrio, the first immigrant - - in New York City  
14 is a Dominican, his name is James Rodriguez who  
15 came to this country in 1613. So when we talk  
16 about especially the Dominican Studies to make a  
17 major contribution to getting all the information  
18 about James Rodriguez so thank you Anthony and the  
19 institute and also Altagracias and those of you  
20 not seen Raising Victor Vargas it was a great  
21 movie that Altagracias played a role that grandma.  
22 It was a great movie that you can go to Youtube  
23 and find Raising Victor Vargas. It's a great  
24 movie about Latino family in New York City so  
25 thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very  
3 much and our last but certainly not least panel is  
4 Soya Mujera, from the Latin America Workers  
5 Project, Liz Maria Arias and Sonya M. Toelo, all  
6 from the Latin America Workers Project doing a  
7 great job around the city especially with our day  
8 labors, our - - . [foreign audio]

9 LIHA: Well, good afternoon  
10 everyone. I especially want to congratulate  
11 council member Daniel Dromm and council member  
12 Ydanis Rodriguez for their leadership on this  
13 important matter for our future for our future  
14 leaders. My name is Liha [phonetic] I'm from the  
15 Latin Workers Project and I'll be translating for  
16 mothers of two I think it's more than two talented  
17 kids that are currently in college.

18 SOYA MUJERA [VIA INTERPRETER]: Good  
19 afternoon my name is Soya Mujera [phonetic] and I  
20 am the mother of two kids that are currently in  
21 college. One of my girls is studying medicine  
22 right now. And my other kid is studying geology in  
23 college. Thanks to the hard work of my husband  
24 and I with two jobs me and my husband has been  
25 able to pay for the tuition of my two kids. My

1 girl who is studying medicine for two years  
2 recently couldn't continue because she was asked  
3 for a social security number and because of that  
4 she could no longer study medicine. So I'm here  
5 for you leaders to help us to push this dream  
6 together because like my girl who wants to study  
7 medicine like my girl who wants to study medicine  
8 she really wants to study medicine so we want to  
9 make this possible.  
10

11 It's very important to pass this and  
12 your support is very valuable because we do  
13 support this country like my kid the one that is  
14 studying geology he is also volunteering at the  
15 Latin American Workers Project teaching English  
16 and my other girl volunteering at a church and  
17 community service. So like my kids they came  
18 young here and we as a family do contribute so all  
19 we have we invest it here and we will invest in  
20 the future of this country, I want to add  
21 something else my husband worked as the ground  
22 zero for 28 days we do contribute to this country.  
23 Thank you so we request all your help to help this  
24 dream together. We do love this country. God  
25 Bless America.

2 LIHA: It makes me cry because I  
3 know the personal story, sorry.

4 MS. MUJERAS: I ask for help because  
5 we do contribute to this country and I have never  
6 asked for help to the government but I do ask this  
7 time. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you Liha  
9 and don't worry that's why we're all in this.

10 FEMALE VOICE: Good afternoon  
11 everyone I am very sensitive and I will probably  
12 also cry. I also came to this country a few years  
13 ago and I brought my kids for a better future.  
14 One that was 6, the other one was 4 and the other  
15 was 3 years old. All of them finished  
16 kindergarten, high school and are currently in  
17 college trying to finish college. They are  
18 working very hard right now, working several jobs,  
19 going to college, they have never asked for help  
20 to the government, trying to make a better life.

21 I don't have the same luck as my  
22 colleague because I don't have a permanent job I'm  
23 a day labor. The job of a day labor is not steady  
24 I can't afford to pay their college degree so they  
25 have to work to pay their own studies but what I

2 can do is I can pay their housing their food but I  
3 do give them moral support because I know that  
4 there is a opportunity to become professionals and  
5 future leaders. Especially right now they are  
6 very depressed. They are very depressed right now  
7 even though they are going to college because they  
8 have got to the end and think what is the point of  
9 going to college working two jobs to get a degree  
10 when they can't even exercise their career and  
11 contribute to this country.

12           However I do tell them for them to  
13 be strong enough because I know that it's possible  
14 to make this happen and they have to be strong and  
15 I have to be strong to support my kids. I do tell  
16 them that to be patient because I know that this  
17 is the country of dreams and opportunities that we  
18 have to be patient because there will be one day  
19 that even though they finish their degrees they  
20 might be cleaning the streets there might be a  
21 future where the college degree they will have a n  
22 opportunity to contribute to this country.

23           I know that us mothers there's  
24 thousands of mothers outside hoping that our kids  
25 go to college and it's our hope that this dream



1  
2 will be possible. And my colleague says we hope  
3 that this is possible and for all of us to pass  
4 the Dream Act. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [foreign  
6 audio] I hope that John is ready to get my phone  
7 call because I will ask John on how can we help  
8 this student so [foreign audio] and he know those  
9 are the phone call that I make when he had like  
10 those type of students so [foreign audio] so we  
11 will sit down and see if she had the academic  
12 record that is required for her to be at a medical  
13 school or whatever so we will sit down with you.

14 [foreign audio] Working class people  
15 having to go through today's challenges through  
16 generations, through centuries, - - walking  
17 hundreds of miles who were able to get certain  
18 rights for workers. Because Nelson Mandela would  
19 end the segregation in South Africa. So I think  
20 that we are in the right path. I mean we have to  
21 responsible we have to keep pushing to get the  
22 Dream Act a reality not just to help the  
23 undocumented student but to help this nation that  
24 was created by immigrants. But also to help this  
25 nation to be ready to compete nationwide. I mean

2 we contribute not only be doing volunteer work  
3 when you go to any store no one asks our people  
4 if they are undocumented or not. When you  
5 purchase any good at any store so we contribute  
6 billions of dollars nationwide. [foreign audio].

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And just to wrap  
8 it up I just want to say although we ended up on a  
9 bit of a sad note it's very important for us to  
10 remember that what we're talking about here are  
11 people's lives and this is the sadness that people  
12 who play with politics in people's lives causes in  
13 people's lives and that's why continuing the fight  
14 and keeping the hope alive for the future of the  
15 Dream Act is so important and the reason why we  
16 wanted to have this hearing today.

17 I want to thank all of my colleagues  
18 I wanted to thank Chairman Ydanis Rodriguez from  
19 the Higher Education committee and all of the  
20 advocates for coming to the hearing today. And we  
21 will now close the vote any council members who  
22 did not vote at this point it is just now the end  
23 of the voting time. Thank you. This meeting is  
24 adjourned.

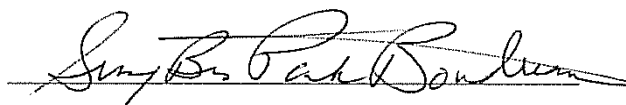
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Sung Bin Park-Boudreau certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date October 2, 2010