

More Than 20 Undocumented Youth Risk Arrest, Deportation, Stage Sit-in at Congressional Offices on Capitol Hill

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Washington, DC – Today, July 20th, over 20 undocumented immigrant youth from all over the country are risking arrest and deportation as they stage sit-ins at various congressional offices in Washington D.C. in order to urge congressional leadership to take action and pass the DREAM Act, a narrowly-tailored, bipartisan bill which would grant immigrant youth a path to citizenship. According to recent surveys by First Focus, 70% of the American public supports the DREAM Act.

They are holding sit-ins in the offices of the following elected officials: Senator Menendez, Senate majority leader Reid, Senator Feinstein, Senator McCain, and Senator Schumer.

Erika Andiola of Arizona states, "My parents sacrificed everything for me so I could pursue the American Dream. To deny my dreams is to deny the dreams of my parents. I'm doing this for them." Andiola is a graduate of Arizona State University and holds a bachelor of arts in psychology.

After two months of coast-to-coast actions, including dozens of sit-ins, civil disobedience actions, and protracted hunger strikes by both undocumented youth and community members, they have decided to bring the cause of their lives to Washington D.C. The immigrant youth participating in today's action hail from Illinois, Virginia, New York, California, Arizona, Kansas, Missouri, and Michigan.

Rosario Lopez of North Carolina states, "We have nothing to fear anymore except inaction. Our spirits grow stronger every day." Lopez is a graduate of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, holds a bachelor of science in biology, and aspires to pursuing a PhD. In June, she participated in a 13-day hunger strike in front of Senator Hagan's office.

Jose Torres of Texas states, "The DREAM Act is the critical first increment in a longer process of immigration reform. We're here to fight for our dreams and the dreams of our communities." Torres is a graduate of the University of Texas. He holds a bachelor of arts in business administration and aspires to attend law school.

At least 65,000 undocumented immigrant youth graduate from high schools every year, and many of them struggle to attend institutes of higher education and the military. The DREAM Act will grant youth who traveled to the United States before the age of 16 a path to citizenship contingent on continuous presence in the country, good behavior, and the attainment of at least a two-year university degree or a two-year commitment to the armed forces.

The DREAM is Coming project is a collaboration between multiple organizations, including the New York State Youth Leadership Council, the Immigrant Youth Justice League, Dream Team Los Angeles, Kansas Missouri Dream Alliance, Arizona Dream Act Coalition, the Orange County Dream Team, University Leadership Initiative of Texas, Virginia DreamActivist, and DREAMActivist.org.

To read the personal stories of the DREAMers, visit www.action.dreamactivist.org

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