MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

S.471-C (Peralta)/A. 9605-A (De La Rosa)

Enacts the New York state DREAM ACT by creating the New York DREAM fund commission and amends eligibility requirements and conditions governing certain awards.

New York University (NYU) strongly supports S.471-B (Peralta), the New York State DREAM Act, which will assist children of immigrants in gaining access to higher education opportunities in New York State by reducing financial barriers.

The DREAM Act allows undocumented students who have graduated New York State high schools to be eligible for financial aid programs already offered in the State, including the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP), the Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) and other programs. Further, it creates the DREAM fund to provide additional scholarship funds to advance education opportunities for children of immigrants living in New York State. It also allows families of undocumented students to open a New York State 529 tuition account, a critical benefit to planning for future higher education opportunities.

The NYU community fully supports the New York State DREAM Act as we have always encouraged students of all ethnic and economic backgrounds to pursue quality higher education. Expanding educational opportunities for children of immigrants not only helps individual students, it helps entire communities, states and the nation as a whole. Ensuring an educated and technologically literate workforce, encompassing both U.S. citizens and children of immigrants, is a key ingredient to ensuring a robust and diverse economy.

NYU has been supportive of the Dream Act at the state and national level and we were pleased to launch a pilot program that offers institutional scholarship aid to eligible undocumented students from New York on par with what is offered to U.S. residents. We believe NYU offers a great education and the intent of this pilot is to offer additional financial support to help enable eligible undocumented men and women from New York to attend NYU. The above legislation would further assist our institutional efforts to provide access to higher education to undocumented students by providing these students with the same opportunities as their peers.

In a rapidly expanding and interconnected global educational environment we cannot limit the ability of students to pursue a higher education in the country in which they have spent their entire lives. The New York DREAM Act represents common sense legislation that would give certain eligible students who grew up in the United States and graduated from high school in New York a chance to contribute to the nation by pursuing a higher education.

Accordingly, NYU strongly supports S.471-C (Peralta)/A. 9605-A (De La Rosa) and urges the Legislature to pass this bill.

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