

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Press Release

**It's Time to DREAM Big:
Immigrant Student Rights Activists Stage March & Rally in Harrisonburg**

WHEN: 5 P.M.

WHERE: Harrisonburg, VA, in front of Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church

WHO: DREAM Activist - VA (organizers) and over 200 student and community supporters

WHAT: March and Rally for DREAM Act

VISUAL: 200+ students dressed in graduation gowns holding signs and chanting for Warner to support the DREAM Act. Rally with speakers, including high school teachers, DREAM Act youth advocate and pastor, mock graduation ceremony and acapella singers.

Harrisonburg, VA – High school and college students will join with supporters throughout the region to stage the first march and rally for immigrant student rights ever held in Harrisonburg. The effort, organized by the town’s youth-led “DREAM Activist – Virginia,” will occur on June 9th to align with the National Day of Action, when hundreds of grassroots advocacy groups have planned similar events across the country.

The march and rally center around the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. The DREAM Act would provide a 6-year long pathway to citizenship and higher education for approximately 65,000 qualifying undocumented high school graduates each year.

Isabel, age 25, a lead organizer of the action, has been fighting for the DREAM Act since it was introduced in Congress in 2001. Nine years later, the act needs only 6 more co-sponsors before July 1st to pass the Senate. As of now, neither of Virginia’s Senators have co-sponsored the bill, although Senator Webb has voted for it in the past. “We want Senator Mark Warner to get the message that with his co-sponsorship, thousands of dreams will become a reality,” says Isabel. “Without his support, another class of hard working intelligent students will be lost.”

Starting at 5 P.M. on June 9th in front of the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, DREAM Activist – Virginia will lead over 200 supporters, dressed in graduation caps and gowns, on a march that will lead them to a rally at Court Square. There, community

leader Rick Castaneda will host community members as they tell their personal stories, a JMU Acapella group performs, and a mock graduation ceremony is held.

“This event is a way to empower our large immigrant youth population both here in Harrisonburg and all around the nation,” says organizer Nicole Budzius, 22. “It enables them to take action to achieve their dreams of higher education and success so they are able to give back to their community.”

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