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**BOISE IMMIGRANT TEENAGERS WELCOME BACK LOCAL STUDENT:
“SHE TRAVELED TO WASHINGTON D.C. TO FIGHT FOR ALL OUR DREAMS.”**

Boise, ID – A group of immigrant teenagers and other supporters gathered today at Boise State University to welcome Melissa Lopez back from Washington, D.C., where she joined with immigrant students and educators from around the country to participate in the United We Dream Campaign’s “Back to School” Event. Melissa is currently a first-year student at Boise State University. She traveled to Washington, D.C. to carry the dreams of young immigrants who have grown up in Idaho and graduated from Idaho high schools, but who can not go on to study because they lack official immigration status.

“I have lived in Idaho all my life,” said Lopez. “I have friends who’ve grown up here, who graduated from high school with me, but now have to watch as I go on to the university to pursue my dreams, and they can’t come. They would like to continue going to school and be able to contribute back to our communities, but they can’t because they don’t have immigration papers.” Currently, thousands of young immigrants in the United States have no access to the lawful permanent residence status they need to be able to pursue affordable higher education.

The United We Dream Campaign was organized to urge Congress to support bipartisan bills that will enable immigrant students to realize their dreams of going to college and to fully participate in American society. In the Senate, the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (D.R.E.A.M.) Act (S.1545) was introduced by Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL), and is co-sponsored by Idaho Senators Larry Craig and Mike Crapo. The D.R.E.A.M. Act would allow Idaho to provide in-state college tuition to undocumented students who grew up in Idaho, and it would provide a path for students who meet certain requirements to become lawful permanent residents. House Representatives Chris Cannon (R-UT), Howard Berman (D-CA) and Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) introduced similar legislation known as the Student Adjustment Act (H.R. 1684).

In Washington, D.C., Melissa met with Senator Crapo to personally thank him for his support of the dreams of young people like herself. “Unfortunately, we weren’t able to travel to Washington, D.C., to thank our supporters and explain to the country how important this legislation is,” said 18-year-old Carlos, who grew up in the Treasure Valley and went to high school here but has been unable to get official status. “But we’re really happy that Melissa went to represent us. Hopefully all of our elected leaders will recognize how much we offer our communities and agree that this is the right thing to do.”

“United We Dream” is a national campaign composed of community groups from around the country, including the Idaho Community Action Network.

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For more information, please contact

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