

Voces De La Frontera: DACAmended youth to Cardinal Dolan: Rescind Paul Ryan keynote invitation if he won't meet immigrant youth

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DACAmended Youth to Cardinal Dolan: Rescind Paul Ryan Keynote Invitation If He Won't Meet Immigrant Youth

NEW YORK CITY —This week, immigrant rights leaders are from New York, Wisconsin, and around the country are calling on Cardinal Timothy Dolan to rescind his invitation of House Speaker Paul Ryan as the keynote speaker for the annual Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation children's charity dinner unless Ryan finally agrees to meet immigrant youth currently protected by Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). For months, Speaker Ryan has refused to meet with immigrant youth from his own district, and they are deeply offended that Cardinal Dolan would give Speaker Ryan such a high profile at an event meant to raise charitable contributions for young people when his actions run so contrary to that mission. Immigrant youth from Wisconsin and New York, with allies from around the country, are demanding that Dolan rescind the Al Smith Dinner invitation unless Ryan agrees to meet with immigrant youth and commit to bringing a clean DREAM Act to the floor for a vote. Groups issuing the call include Voces de la Frontera (Wisconsin), Make the Road New York, the Fair Immigration Reform Movement

(FIRM), Reform Immigration For America (RI4A), the Center for Popular Democracy, and United We Dream.

“As a DACA recipient from Paul Ryan’s district, I’m worried about my future, and that of all the other young people whose lives hang in the balance,” said **Fernanda Jimenez, a high school student and member of Voces de la Frontera’s student arm Youth Empowered in the Struggle.** “As Catholic DACA recipients from Ryan’s district, we urge Cardinal Dolan to use his moral authority to urge Speaker Ryan to meet with his constituents and to pass a clean Dream Act. We have gone on hunger strike outside Ryan’s office, we have held a prayer vigil at his church, and we have invited him to town halls for over two years. Cardinal Dolan has spoken forcefully in defense of DACA and has called for a legislative solution. Time is running out. While Paul Ryan refuses to meet with us and refuses to bring the clean Dream Act up for a vote, he should not be the keynote speaker at this charity event for children.”

Last month, Speaker Ryan’s staff refused to open the door when his constituents flew to Washington, DC to meet with him. The petition urges Cardinal Timothy Dolan to rescind Speaker Ryan’s keynote invitation unless he meets with Wisconsin DACAmented youth and steps up to pass a clean DREAM Act.

Carlos Vargas, Make the Road New York community navigator and DACA recipient, said, “At a time where deportations are rising and Catholic families are being ripped apart, it is deeply disturbing Cardinal Dolan would invite Speaker Paul Ryan to speak at a fundraising dinner for children’s charities when Ryan keeps refusing to meet with young people like me and take action to protect us. Immigrant youth across New York, including tens of thousands in the Cardinal’s Diocese, need Congress to pass a clean DREAM Act to keep our families together and allow us to keep working and studying in this country that we call home. Cardinal Dolan should tell Ryan to meet with us to hear for himself—and, if Ryan won’t sit down with us, he should not be given the space to speak at the Al Smith dinner.”

A letter from Voces de la Frontera and Make the Road New York to Cardinal Dolan can be found [here](#). A [petition](#) to Cardinal Dolan has generated thousands of signatures.

New York City Councilmember Carlos Menchaca added, “We find ourselves in a political environment poisoned with hate and antipathy toward DACA recipients.

Innocent people who have spent their entire lives in this country, learning, working, and strengthening our country. We cannot stay quiet and we will not stay quiet in the face of these attacks, nor can we honor the politicians that are playing politics, poor and senseless, with people's lives. As Chair of the Immigration Committee, I call upon Cardinal Dolan to rescind his invitation to Speaker Ryan to be the keynote speaker for the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation children's charity dinner. Until Mr. Ryan decides to be the Speaker for all Americans, puts forward a clean DREAM Act, and finally meets with his immigrant constituents, he has no business proclaiming to be a defender of American youth. In the interim, I ask that Cardinal Dolan reconsider his decision, and offer the role of keynote speaker to someone who has a track record of defending our young people, not someone fighting to deport them from the only home they have ever known."

Kica Matos, Director of Immigrant Rights and Racial Justice at the Center for Community Change and spokesperson for the Fair Immigration Reform Movement, said: "Speaker Ryan needs to do his job. The lives—and the futures of nearly one million young people are in limbo. He should drink from the well of courage, exercise leadership and pass a clean DREAM bill. It is what the majority of Americans want. It is also the morally right thing to do. We urge Cardinal Dolan to rescind his invitation to the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation children's charity dinner until Speaker Ryan meets with immigrant children and commits to bring a clean Dream Act to the floor for a vote."