



SUPPORTS

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S4179-C Perkins /A6829-C Linares New York Dream Act

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to establishing the New York Dream act providing certain benefits to undocumented immigrants that satisfy certain criteria

Purpose:

To increase college access by extending state-, city-, town- and/or village-funded financial aid to undocumented immigrant students.

Summary of Provisions:

Grants access to financial aid opportunities within the state to undocumented young adults who (1) entered into the country before the age of 18, (2) are under the age of 35, (3) have attended a New York high school for at least two years and earned a high school diploma or earned a GED in New York State, (4) have not been convicted of a violent felony, and (5) have applied to enter college within five years of receiving their high school diploma or GED.

Statement of Support:

New York is a city of immigrants, and CUNY is their university. In fact, immigrants make up 43% of CUNY's student body. They contribute to the economy, the life and culture of our state; they deserve the chance at a better life that CUNY has to offer, regardless of their immigration status.

A decade ago the state extended access to a college education to undocumented students with New York high school diplomas or GEDs by allowing them to pay in-state tuition rates at CUNY and SUNY. An estimated 4,500 undocumented students are now able to attend CUNY because of this historic reform. Undocumented students, however, are barred from financial aid programs, such as state Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), or federal Pell grants and Stafford Loans. And New York City's Peter Vallone Scholarship, the only large, public scholarship program that was available to undocumented students at CUNY, was defunded in 2010.

Like the majority of CUNY students, undocumented students tend to come from families of very modest means. With \$1,500 in tuition hikes scheduled through 2015 and no access to financial aid, many low-income undocumented students may have to abandon their dreams of a college education and drop out of CUNY. Many others may never apply to college at all.

Lost opportunity for undocumented students means lost tax revenue and lost economic vitality for the state. The state, on average, gets about \$1,000 more a year in taxes from a person who has a two-year degree and about \$3,900 more from a person with a four-year degree when compared to a high school graduate. Over a work-life, workers with Associate's degrees earn 24% than workers with only a high school diploma. For Bachelor's degrees, it's 66% more.

PSC STRONGLY URGES ENACTMENT OF THIS LEGISLATION.

Wr: 5/14/12
To: Full Senate & Assembly on 5/21/12
By: KP