

FROM THE GROUND UP

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Immigrant Student Legislation *Helping Undocumented Students Achieve their Dreams*

National Overview

From the National Council of La Raza

Every year, high schools around the country graduate a significant number of talented immigrant students, many of whom have grown up in the United States, attended the same elementary and secondary schools as native-born students, and excelled at the same academic requirements as their classmates. Like their U.S. born classmates, these students share the same dream of pursuing a higher education. Unfortunately, they lack access to the state and federal financial assistance and in-state tuition rate available to their U.S. born peers, making it virtually impossible for these students to afford a college education. In effect, through no act of their own, they are denied the opportunity to share in the "American Dream."

To address this discrepancy, several bipartisan bills were introduced during the 107th Congress. In the Senate, Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Richard Durbin (D-IL) sponsored the "Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act" (DREAM Act). In the House, several bills were introduced as well. Among them was the "Student Adjustment Act," introduced by Representatives Chris Cannon (R-UT), Howard Berman (D-CA), and Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA). If enacted, both bills would facilitate access to postsecondary educational opportunities for Hispanics and other students in the United States who currently face barriers in financing a college education. They would also allow hardworking immigrant youth who have long resided in the U.S. the chance to adjust their status, enabling them to contribute fully to our society.

See overviews of the respective bills on page 5.

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Aidil Polanco Ortiz speaks to a group of migrant students visiting UNC-Chapel Hill. Photo by Luis Velasco

- ❖ In 2000, the Urban Institute estimated that 50,000 to 65,000 undocumented students graduated from high school in the U.S. yearly.
- ❖ The high school graduation rate for migrant children is 50%.
- ❖ The college participation rate for dependent family members 18 to 24 years old from low-income families in North Carolina is only 19.6%.
- ❖ North Carolina leads the US in uneducated young Hispanics 10-28.
- ❖ 47% percent of Hispanics in North Carolina between the ages 16 -19 are not enrolled in school and lack a high school diploma.
- ❖ The average in-state tuition at a North Carolina public university is \$2,299 and \$891 at a community college. The average out-of-state tuition is \$10,500 and \$3,600, respectively.
- ❖ The average salary for an undocumented farmworker is \$5,000 a year.

Sources from this issue include:

www.saf-unite.org	The Urban Institute
www.postsecondary.org	Immigration & Naturalization Services (INS)
Raleigh News & Observer	National Council of La Raza (NCLR)

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