

Support SB268/HB207 – Higher Education - Undocumented Students - Out-of-State Tuition Exemption Eligibility

Dear Senator Feldman, Chair, Senator Kagan, Vice-Chair, and all members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

As a constituent I encourage you as a member of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee to vote in favor of SB268/HB207 - Higher Education - Undocumented Students - Out-of-State Tuition Exemption Eligibility – that will reduce the number of years for which an individual or the individual’s parent or guardian must file taxes to be eligible to receive an out-of-state tuition exemption.

Since its implementation, the Maryland Dream Act has had a profound impact on the state’s undocumented student population and our broader community. Some notable outcomes include: The availability of in-state tuition rates leading to a surge in enrollment among undocumented students at Maryland’s public colleges and universities. This increase in enrollment not only benefits the students but also enriches the campus community by fostering greater diversity and inclusion.

It also allows for upward social mobility and the chance for these individuals to better contribute to our state economy. Graduates who benefit from the Act are better equipped to enter the workforce, secure higher-paying jobs, and contribute to the state’s tax base. This, in turn, helps to strengthen Maryland’s economy and improve the overall quality of life for its residents.

The Dream Act has helped to bridge the gap between undocumented students and their documented peers, cultivating a sense of belonging and acceptance within the community. As these students achieve academic success and become active participants in society, they serve as role models and advocates for future generations of immigrants.

The expansion of Dream Act eligibility is a clear expression of our American creed and a value that is clearly documented in Article 43 of the Maryland Declaration of Rights that encourages “the diffusion of knowledge and virtue, the extension of a judicious system of general education, the promotion of literature, the arts, sciences, agriculture, commerce and manufactures, and the general melioration of the condition of the People.”

With an incoming federal administration bent on rolling back civil rights and immigrant rights, Maryland can and should take a leading role in affirming these rights and upholding the value of every Maryland resident’s humanity, no matter their background, race, gender, sexual orientation, ability level, gender identity, and, yes, immigration status.

Please vote in favor of SB268.

Thank you.

Dr. Marina Lambrinou.