



City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Clarke

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
In Support of Proposed State Legislation - Higher Education - Tuition Charges - Maryland High School Students

FOR the purpose of supporting the introduction of state legislation granting in-state tuition to students from Maryland tax paying families who attend and graduate from Maryland high schools, regardless of their immigration status; requesting the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2011 Maryland General Assembly to support the legislation if introduced; and urging the Governor to enact this legislation, or similar measures, if adopted by the Maryland State Legislature.

Recitals

The City of Baltimore has always been home to immigrants and migrants from around the globe, and our proud history has included periods in which public schools taught in German and City government meetings were interpreted into German. During the 1920s, more than 1 in 4 City residents was a first or second generation immigrant; and, in just the last 20 years, our diverse immigrant community has included immigrants from nations such as Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Korea, Mexico, China, Nigeria, Germany, India, Ukraine, and the Philippines.

Today, African, Asian, and Latino populations are growing at a steady rate in Baltimore City and throughout the state of Maryland, making immigration reform of crucial importance to this City. The Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs Annual Report 2008-2009 reports that Maryland's Hispanic population has increased by 65% since 2000. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that the newest members of our community are extended the same rights and protections the rest of us seek to preserve and enjoy.

However, our broken immigration system has resulted in many immigrants living in the shadows, without any path to adjust their legal status. Despite this lack of legal status, immigrant youth are achieving and contributing in our schools, communities, religious institutions, and civic organizations throughout the City. Many of these young people come from impoverished families and face enormous pressures to either work nights or drop out of school all together in order to begin bringing home income for their families. Those who do persevere through high school often find college prohibitively expensive, especially at the much higher out-of-state tuition rates that they currently must pay.

Access to higher education would allow these young people to make even greater contributions to our society, increase the educated workforce, and decrease the numbers of those forced to live in poverty. By demonstrating that a path out of poverty does exist, it can also prevent students from dropping out of schools, and keep them off the streets. After investing sometimes 12 years of public education into our children, the City cannot afford to lose that investment by blocking talented students from continuing on to higher education.

Ten states have addressed this concern by enacting laws permitting certain undocumented students who have attended and graduated from their primary and secondary schools to pay the same tuition as their classmates at public institutions of education. The states are California, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin.

According to experts in these states, the cost of implementation has been negligible, and in fact the money paid by these students actually tends to increase school revenues because it represents income that would not otherwise be there. Also, there have been broader economic benefits in those states because of a better trained workforce. In Texas, the first state to enact this sort of law, a government review found that every dollar invested into higher education yielded more than \$5 for the state economy in the long run.

During the 2003 session of the Maryland General Assembly a bill that would have allowed immigrant students to pay in-state tuition was adopted by the General Assembly, but was vetoed by then Governor Robert Ehrlich. During the 2007 General Assembly session, a similar bill was again approved by a super-majority in the Maryland House but was not considered by the Senate. It is past time that Maryland join her sister states in allowing all children of tax paying families who graduate from local schools the same access to higher education as their peers. The City Council urges that this legislation be enacted in the 2011 session of the Maryland General Assembly.

Undocumented immigrants throughout the United States make substantial contributions to our economic, civic, and cultural life but unjustly remain vulnerable to exploitation despite those contributions, due to our broken immigration system. We believe in the dignity of all Baltimore City residents, regardless of immigration status, and recognize the importance of their many contributions to the social, religious, cultural, and economic life of the City. We also believe that access to education is a cornerstone of our democratic values as a nation and as a City and recognize that equitable access to higher education will motivate our youth to stay in school in order to achieve and succeed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That this Body supports the introduction of state legislation granting in-state tuition to students from Maryland tax paying families who attend and graduate from Maryland high schools, regardless of their immigration status; requests the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2011 Maryland General Assembly to support the legislation if introduced; and urges the Governor to enact this legislation, or similar measures, if adopted by the Maryland State Legislature.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Governor, the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2011 Session of the Maryland General Assembly, the Honorable Members of the Maryland Delegation to the 112th Congress, the Baltimore City School Board, the Baltimore City Hispanic Commission, the Board of Directors of CASA de Maryland, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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