

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Governor of South Carolina
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor Harley,

My name is David and I am writing this letter to urge you to help change how this state views immigrant students. Like many I have qualified for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and am considered lawfully present in the United States. However in South Carolina this means that if I wish to pursue a higher education I would have to pay out of state tuition. Regardless that South Carolina has been my home for thirteen years I am forced to pay out of state tuition in almost every university in this state. Along with having to pay almost double what students pay DACA students are limited when it comes to receiving help from scholarships and are entirely unable to receive student financial aid or other government assistance. When a DACA student graduates high school in South Carolina he or she is left with three options. One is to accept that they have to pay out of state tuition regardless of how long they've been living here. Another is to attend a technical school and settle for an associate's degree because even if that student was accepted into a four year institution he or she would have a difficult time trying to afford it with no assistance from scholarships or federal aid. Lastly, a DACA student who graduates high school in this state and can't afford out of state tuition is left with just a high school diploma. These are very frequently the only options for immigrant students in this state, simply because he or she doesn't have the resources for further education.

Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Virginia are amongst the 19 states whom have found some form of tuition equity at their public colleges and universities so that immigrant students can reach their full potential. I urge you to take notice of this issue and to act now to do these things in particular.

1. Allow DACA students to pay in state tuition for a public college or university if they meet the same requirements to qualify for in state tuition as everyone else in the state must.
2. Allow DACA students to pay in state tuition if he or she attends a technical school if they meet the same requirements to qualify for in state tuition as everyone in the state must.
3. Allow more access to private scholarships or grants to DACA students since federal aid is unobtainable.

Once again I urge you to find a fair tuition rate for those students who wish to further their education within this state. Not only because it is the right thing to do but because South Carolina should welcome smart, hardworking young people into the economy and society rather than putting a stop sign after their 12th grade.

Sincerely,
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