

Cal-Grant for All

When the Dream Act passed by Governor Brown a big debate opened in California. The big question became Should state funded financial aid and access for California's public universities and colleges be available to undocumented immigrants? Many people believe it was about time this law was passed, and many other people say it's the worse thing that has happened in California. Brown stated, "Going to college is a dream that promises intellectual excitement and creative thinking"(Brown par 6). This makes sense because everyone wants to be successful and one of the best ways of being successful is by having a good education. Undocumented students should be allowed to attend State University's and receive financial help for the reasons shown below.

If one is capable of attending a state university then it is only fair to allow them. Before the Dream Act law was passed many undocumented students were denied access to State Universities, or were charged with out of state tuition which most students could not afford. Brown implied in a speech, "The Dream Act benefits us all by giving top students a chance to improve their lives, and the lives of all of us"(Brown par 6). Many will agree to this if a top student attends a UC or state university he/she will eventually give back to the community. Many people do not see that these students have the power to change the world. If students were given the chance to attend college many would become successful lawyers, doctors, teachers, or engineers. Since the chance is not given, we are only hurting our country.

Many documented students that are given the chance to attend college and receive financial aid and scholarships do not take advantage of what is given to them. Most undocumented students have gone through hard times getting into the country, finding a home, finding a job, and adjusting to a new country where they do not know the language. All that is on their mind is one day being successful and hoping that their kids get a good education because after all this is the land of the free and a country where dreams come true. About two years ago a family member, my uncle, my fathers brother moved here illegally from Mexico. He came here with the dream of giving his two daughters a better life. His daughters now attend school in the United States and are receiving a much better education than they were receiving in Mexico. Although they are still young, they one day wish to attend a good college and be successful in life.

Gil Cedillo the Assemblyman of Los Angeles is one who supports the Dream Act. He stated, "After having invested twelve years in the high school education of these young men and women, who are here through no fault of their own; it is the smartest thing for us to do to permit these students to get scholarships and be treated like every other student" (Brown par 10) When a statement like this is made, it makes more people want to agree with the Dream Act, because it makes so much sense. These illegal students were brought here by their parents at a very young age with no choice of their own. One must consider the fact that the parents of these undocumented students are somehow serving America. Many parents of illegal students do jobs that many do not want to do, such as field work, landscape jobs, concrete and construction jobs, etc. At the forum in State University Stanislaus Dr. Jim Riggs who was President of Columbia College, Vice President of Education and Student Services, Executive Dean of Lake Country Campus of Yuba College has an extensive background in higher education, and his answer to the

question above was, “if an undocumented student has been here for most of their life and or has done at least three years of high school he/she should be treated the same as everyone else.” “He also stated that he believed this because not many took into consideration what the parents of these students are doing for America. So why not give them an equal chance”(Riggs)

This Dream Act becomes a problem when undocumented students receive Cal Grant money. This is a problem because Cal Grant only holds a certain amount of money so if money is going to be given to documented and undocumented students then documented students are going to receive less money. So the question then is, is it right to give money to someone who is not from our country? Most republicans voted against the Dream Act, because they do not believe it is right to give money to someone who came to our country illegally. Representative Kristin Olsen voted against this act, and at a forum about higher education at State University Stanislaus she stated, “all students should have an opportunity to attend college, but I am against the Dream Act because it is taking away from those who were born here”(Olsen). The Dream Act is not in any way taking an education from anyone. It is opening doors to those who deserve and want an education.

Not everyone celebrated when Governor Brown signed the Dream Act. Many Republicans and conservative groups assailed Brown for signing it. Assemblyman Tim Donnelly of San Bernardino stated, “It’s morally wrong we have just created a new entitlement that is going to cause tens of thousands of people to come here illegally from all over the world”(Brown par 9). This statement is very meaning full and is in a way true, but in order for the Dream Act to apply to an illegal student the student must graduate from a California high school after attending school in the state for at least three years and must affirm that they are in process of applying to legalize their immigration status.

Passing the Dream Act law was one of the best decisions Brown has made. Brown has opened doors to many students who did not have a chance of attending college but were capable of reaching goals. Angelica Salas, executive director of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles said, "Saturday was a great day for California, for education and for immigrant students who have kept their end of the bargain and continue to give their best to the only nation they know as their home." The statement by Salas says it all. Undocumented students will now work harder than ever to reach their dreams and goals, and one day give back to their nation. With an equal chance given to all, America will become a better place.

Works Cited

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