

### Undocumented Students, Financial Funding, and a Higher Education

Since the beginning of the US, immigrants have been denied rights, including education. Undocumented students still struggle to just receive financial aid for their higher education. Recently the California Dream Act became a law and granted undocumented immigrants access to state financial aid at public universities and community colleges. Undocumented students should have access to financial aid and to California's public universities and colleges so they are able to receive better jobs and incomes to support their families in the future.

Governor Jerry brown recently signed the California Dream Act into law. This granted illegal immigrants access to state financial aid at public universities and community colleges. It fulfilled a campaign promise to allow high-achieving students who want to become citizens the opportunity to attend college, regardless of their immigration status (Brown). Many undocumented students will benefit by this by the fact that most undocumented immigrants will finally be able to go to college without risk of being deported or to get a better education that will allow them to help support their families. Beginning in 2013, illegal immigrants accepted by state universities may receive assistance from Cal-Grants, a public program that last year provided aid to more than 370,000 low-income students. It makes students eligible for institutional grants while attending the University of California and California State University systems and permits them to obtain fee waivers in community colleges (Brown). Even so, many will still disagree with this law or Act yet many will benefit through the fact that they will no longer be struggling to go to college, CSU or UC.

Even though this Dream Act has passed there are still those who argue against it such as Jarrett Stepman who wrote about it in the Human Event. According to Stepman, this will “also, of course, incentivize more border-hoppers to flood the state's taxpayer-supported public university system” (Stepman). Most immigrants will probably not have a higher education in mind. They probably would mainly cross the border to flee from some danger in their country or just to find a better place to live that will support their family in better conditions.

Others argue that it will take money away from legal citizens, such as Krigbaum at an open forum that took place in CSU Stanislaus Turlock, CA. Krigbaum, an author, also argues that giving money to someone illegal takes away money from someone who is not and taking benefits from them as well (Olsen). It might take away money away from the citizens but it will also help those that are actually in need of the money. Also, it would help undocumented students to go to college, CSU's or UC's. Although there are several arguments against this, many support it. At the forum Olsen, who represents the 25<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, argues that everyone should have an opportunity to receive a higher education and financial aid. According to Olsen, if “foreign students have the opportunity to go to colleges, CSU's, UC's, so who are we to say an undocumented student could not” (Olsen). Most people do not realize that foreign students probably receive more benefits than those who are undocumented immigrants. Even so both still struggle on finding a source of money to pay for their Higher Education; since in some countries, they do not provide for a Higher Education and undocumented immigrants must work hard to pay for it. She also argues that, and agrees with Krigbaum, if Cal Grant money were to be given to an undocumented student it would be taking away from someone and there is not enough money for this but later argues that some or most undocumented students came here with out a choice at a young age which makes it a difficult decision. During the Forum Dr. Riggs, a Faculty member in the doctoral program in educational leadership at CSU Stanislaus, supported

Olsen's last comment by saying that there are several definitions to illegal; for example there are some immigrants who have been here for more than 3 years. Also that they should not include those who have been living here for several years as illegal since they have been contributing to society just as legal citizens have been (Olsen). This could apply only to some undocumented immigrants that have been here for several years. Also to immigrants that only have their residency yet even with a residency there are still restrictions.

Undocumented students should receive financial aid and have access to public universities and colleges. People should not oppose this either since America is mainly full of immigrants that once in history were "illegal." The main reason immigrants come here is to find better jobs and public benefits (Drachman 93). This is the main reason why immigrants come to the U.S. and I know for a fact. My family is one of those immigrants who came to find a better life than what they left behind. They also have been "supporting" the U.S. for about 25 years now. Some cousins have been here that long as well, but are not citizens causing them to lose some benefits that regular citizens receive that my cousins and other family members are supporting. Undocumented students "should not be punished" by taking away financial help and be denied higher education because of the illegal "actions of their parents" (Drachman 94). Some of those actions could have been in good intentions such as looking for a better job. They also could have wanted to get their children a better life even if they had to work hard just to give their children that life. Today, people are required for some type of degree just to get a job (Drachman 94). If undocumented students were denied a higher education, they would be stuck within the middle class and will not be able to achieve their American Dream or as Diaz describes "denying undocumented children an education would regulate them to a 'permanent underclass'" (Diaz 114). The requirement of a degree today will make these undocumented

immigrants remain in terrible conditions, such as struggling to find a job that will sustain their families. They would be struggling to help their families and themselves just to survive this cruel world. To me it should be no reason to deny them an education. They have been supporting those who are eligible for financial aid and have access to a university or college, as I mentioned before, such as my family. For those who argue they take money away from legal citizens, well legal citizens also take money from those who are undocumented through taxes and such.

Many now benefit from the recent California Dream Act. Since the California Dream Act has passed my cousin in law is now able to attend school to support his family of four. This act has also helped several others as well yet there are still those who argue against this act or law. Olsen, at the forum, argues that this act is taking the limited amount of dollars from someone else (Olsen). She doesn't realize though that some "illegal immigrants" have been providing as well for those grants or "dollars" for several years. Most undocumented students or immigrants have lived here for several years and did not just recently "cross the border". It not like they are just living in their home doing nothing; they actually have been supporting, for those long years, all those grants or funded government money.

In conclusion, those who are undocumented in the US should have access to financial aid and public universities and colleges. There are many reasons that they should and shouldn't receive these benefits as one may call them. Although, one might say that those who deny something from someone may be doing so in selfish reasons or in logical reasons. Even so, not all undocumented immigrants have come to this country through illegal actions and those who have are escaping the harsh conditions in their native land. They should have the same access to higher education and financial aid, instead of prejudice or illogical reasons for being denied.

## Works Cited

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