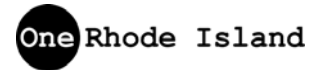


Education and Training



If Rhode Island is to be economically competitive it must do more to ensure that all of its workers, including its foreign-born students, are educated and can compete for 21st century jobs. Yet, the dream of attaining a college education and moving up the economic ladder remains out-of-reach for many children of undocumented immigrants who settle in Rhode Island with their parents.

Under current law, if a Rhode Island student who does not have a legal immigration status is admitted to the University of Rhode Island, Community College of Rhode Island, or Rhode Island College, she must pay out-of-state/international tuition, which is several times higher than in-state tuition. What's more, such students are not eligible for federal financial aid. This practice deprives Rhode Island of educated workers and increased tax revenues.

The reality is that many of these students have applied for their permanent residence and are waiting for a visa, which can take years. Others may have been brought to this country here by relatives when they were very young and may not even realize they are ineligible for a green card and thus, ineligible for in-state tuition and federal financial aid.

All Children Deserve Access to Economic Opportunities through Higher Education

- Of the fifty jobs projected to grow the fastest in the state through 2014 twenty two of them will require a Bachelor's or Advanced Degree. In 2005, a worker with a Bachelor's Degree earned almost twice as much as a worker with only a high school diploma or GED.
 - Since 2001, 10 states have passed laws allowing undocumented students who meet specific criteria, such as attending high school in the state for a certain number of years, to pay the same tuition as their classmates at public universities and colleges. The states are Texas, California, Utah, Washington, New York, Oklahoma, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska and New Mexico.
 - According to the National Immigration Law Center (NILC), only five to 10 percent of undocumented students who graduate from high school go to college, compared to 75 percent of their classmates.
 - A May 2007 report by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston concluded that "the economic impact of allowing undocumented immigrants to pay in-state tuition would be positive." Additionally, the NILC found that states do not lose revenues when these students pay lower tuition since the students would not have been able to afford out-of-state tuition and therefore would not have attended college at all.

One RI Proposal

Support H7871, which allows undocumented high school graduates who meet certain criteria to pay in-state tuition at public universities and colleges. The legislation will improve the state's economic competitiveness by increasing the number of high school graduates who pursue a college degree.