

In-State Tuition for Dreamers & Undocumented Students **Benefits Us All**

*What to know about the federal government's **unlawful attack** on in-state tuition*

The Issue

- On April 29, 2025, President Trump issued an [executive order](#) attempting to block states' lawful ability to offer in-state tuition rates at public colleges and universities.
- The executive order wrongfully alleges that granting in-state tuition to undocumented residents of a state, while not extending the same to out-of-state U.S. citizens, violates [8 U.S.C. § 1623](#).
 - Every state that offers in-state tuition to undocumented residents extends the same access to U.S. citizen residents of their state. In fact, states with accessible in-state tuition for undocumented students require those students to meet the same, or often more stringent, residency requirements as U.S. citizen residents.
- The federal government should respect states' rights when it comes to setting tuition rates for their public colleges and universities.
- For years, FWD.us has been proud to work alongside policymakers, higher education institutions, directly impacted communities, and advocates to protect and expand tuition equity policies that strengthen opportunity and economic mobility. Leaders from both parties have embraced these measures because the results are clear: tuition equity helps students succeed, boosts state economies, and benefits the entire nation.

Why This Matters

- **In-State Tuition Access for Dreamers Has Been a Huge Step Forward:** This unlawful effort to override states would be a deeply harmful step backward.
- **Violation of States' Rights:** States have the autonomy to set their own policies regarding their public education, including residency requirements for colleges and universities.
- **Economic Consequences:** Having a highly educated workforce benefits residents across the state. Earning a college degree or even attending some college [increases](#) residents' earning potential, resulting in greater tax contributions to state and local governments.
- **Social and Civic Consequences:** Expanding access to in-state tuition has been shown to [reduce](#) high school dropout rates for U.S. citizens and immigrants.

How Should Higher Education and States Respond?

- **Avoid pre-emptive changes.** In-state tuition policies have [withstood legal challenges](#), and states have the legal autonomy to create their own policies around public education.
- **Maintain in-state tuition policies.** States have the legal high ground, and this executive order is unlawful. Furthermore, educating all young people is essential to our country's future. The United States cannot grow its workforce or fulfill the needs of an [aging native population](#) without young immigrants. With in-state tuition access, more young people are able to earn degrees. Higher education equates to higher wages, which results in [better employment rates](#), productivity, and economic growth for states.
- **Learn more about supporting Dreamers.** Visit the [FWD.us higher education webpage](#) for resources about supporting undocumented college students.

Support for In-State Tuition is Strong Across Party Lines

In-state tuition for undocumented students, including DACA recipients, has long enjoyed strong, bipartisan support across the country. Leaders of both parties, state legislators, governors, and voters themselves have repeatedly advanced and defended these policies because they work—for students, for states, and the country.

Here are some recent examples:

- **National Trends:** As of 2025, [a total of 24 states and Washington, D.C.](#) offer in-state tuition to undocumented students who meet residency and graduation requirements. This includes a number of conservative leaders in states such as Oklahoma and Kentucky. In-state tuition for undocumented students also has the support of religious leaders, including Catholic [bishops](#) and [advocates](#).

- **Texas:** Texas was the first state to enact [tuition equity in 2001](#), signed into law by Republican Governor Rick Perry. The state's longstanding policy has been successfully defended for over two decades and broadly supported by [businesses](#) across the state. While a new legislative push to end tuition was reintroduced in the Texas Senate, every attempt over the years to repeal in-state tuition for undocumented students has either [failed or been blocked by the courts](#).
- **Georgia (2024-2025):** A growing number of Republican lawmakers have introduced and supported bills to [expand in-state tuition](#) to undocumented students. These efforts have been gaining ground and reflect shifting views even in traditionally conservative states.
- **Arizona (2022):** Voters in Arizona passed [Proposition 308](#), allowing noncitizen residents who meet specific criteria to access in-state tuition. The measure passed with strong bipartisan support from voters, despite significant opposition campaigns.

These efforts reflect a durable consensus: tuition equity is a commonsense, fair policy that expands opportunity, strengthens local economies, and invests in students who are already part of our communities.

What Else Should You Know About In-State Tuition?

- Without in-state tuition policies, most undocumented students would be priced out of higher education. Dreamers are ineligible for any federal financial aid, including Pell Grants, and would face out-of-state tuition rates that are two to three times higher than in-state rates. In-state tuition not only opens the door to college, it also strengthens public colleges and universities. The tuition these students pay represents critical revenue that institutions would not otherwise receive.
- Dreamers who benefit from these policies are deeply rooted in American communities. For example, DACA recipients arrived in the U.S. at an average age of six and have lived here for more than 25 years – growing up in our neighborhoods, attending our schools, and contributing to our communities.
- [Research](#) confirms that offering in-state tuition to undocumented students does not reduce access to enrollment or financial aid for U.S. citizen students.
- While expanding access to in-state tuition to undocumented students has positive economic and social impacts, the total number of individual students who benefit is low. Undocumented students make up [less than 2 percent](#) of the overall college student population.

We need to be prepared to keep fighting for Dreamers and Access to In-State Tuition.

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