

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 140329)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing City Council's Committee on Global Opportunities and the Creative/Innovative Economy to hold hearings concerning college admission and tuition policies of local colleges and universities for undocumented youth in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, There are 1.8 million undocumented youth under the age of 18 growing up in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 65,000 undocumented students, many at the top of their classes, graduate from high school each year; among them an estimated 850 undocumented students, mostly from Philadelphia, graduate from high school in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania each year; and

WHEREAS, National studies show that nearly 50% of undocumented students will drop out of high school because there is little incentive for them to finish high school as they are excluded from the legal workforce and there are multiple barriers to pursuing post secondary education; and

WHEREAS, Only about 5 to 10 percent of undocumented high-school graduates attend college; and

WHEREAS, Although federal law does not prohibit undocumented students from attending U.S. colleges and universities, public or private, they are still excluded by certain higher educational institutions. Furthermore, some colleges only accept them on a case-by-case basis thereby removing objective and transparent criteria; and

WHEREAS, In most cases, college-accepted undocumented students pay full tuition and are ineligible for financial aid. They are also often charged the international student tuition, which is the highest tuition price, regardless of living in state and in county; and

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WHEREAS, In 2012, the Obama Administration announced the “deferred action” initiative, also known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which offers a temporary legal status to undocumented youth who were brought to the U.S. as children allowing them to apply for a social security card and temporary work authorization; and

WHEREAS, According to a study by the Immigration Center Policy, in Pennsylvania there are an estimated 12,570 potential beneficiaries of DACA. The highest number is from Mexico (4,210) followed by: Countries in North & Central America (2,110); Asia (2,580); South America (1,840); Europe (920); and Other Regions (910); and

WHEREAS, According to Professor Roberto Gonzalez of the University of Washington: *“Many of [undocumented immigrant youth] have been in this country almost their entire lives and attend most of their K-12 education here. They are honor roll students, athletes, class presidents, valedictorians, and aspiring teachers, engineers, and doctors. Yet, because of their immigrant status, their day-to-day lives are severely restricted and their futures are uncertain. They cannot legally drive, vote, or work. Moreover, at any time, these young men and women can be, and sometimes are, deported to countries they barely know. They have high aspirations, yet live on the margins. What happens to them is a question fraught with political and economic significance”*; and

WHEREAS, Undocumented youth live in our City and attend our elementary schools and high schools; with greater access to higher educational opportunities provided by over 100 colleges and universities in the region, they can contribute positively to Philadelphia’s social and economic future; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes City Council’s Committee on Global Opportunities and the Creative/Innovative Economy to hold hearings concerning college admission and tuition policies of local colleges and universities for undocumented youth in Philadelphia.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the tenth day of April, 2014.

Darrell L. Clarke
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Oh, Kenney, Quiñones Sánchez, Squilla and Bass

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Oh, Kenney, Quiñones Sánchez, Squilla, Bass Jones, Reynolds Brown, Blackwell, Greenlee, Goode, Johnson, Council President Clarke, Councilmembers O'Brien, Tasco, Henon and O'Neill