



HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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October 6, 2016

Via Electronic Mail and U.S. Mail

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Re: Support for Bill 21-0422, “UDC DREAM Amendment Act of 2015”

On behalf of the Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia (“HBA-DC”), we write in support of Bill 21-0422, “UDC DREAM Amendment Act of 2015” (the “Bill”). The stated purpose of the Bill is to allow District residents, regardless of their federal immigration status, to pay in-state tuition rates and to receive local financial aid for attendance at any University of the District of Columbia (“UDC”) school or campus provided that the resident meets certain graduation and District residency requirements. We strongly urge the Council of the District of Columbia to pass the Bill, which reflects the Council’s continued commitment to equality and education.

The Bill represents an important step forward in allowing tens of thousands of undocumented students who graduate from a U.S. high school to continue advancing in their education and become the leaders of tomorrow. According to a 2005 report from the American Association for State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), research shows that failing to help students attend college results in higher rates of crime, higher costs to state prisons, and

increased spending on social programs.¹ Thus, it is not surprising that 16 states have taken legislative action to grant their undocumented students some level of tuition relief.² The District of Columbia should follow suit and provide these students with an opportunity to contribute the society and economy.

Currently, annual tuition and fees for full-time resident students at the University of the District of Columbia is approximately \$7,500, while the non-resident rate is approximately \$15,000. The HBA-DC is confident that allowing District residents to access in-state tuition and be able to receive financial aid, would significantly increase affordability and improve career opportunities for eager and hard-working students who want to pursue further education.

The HBA-DC exists in part to promote equal justice and opportunity for all Hispanics. Established in 1977, our membership includes several hundred lawyers practicing in Washington D.C., Maryland, and Virginia as well as Hispanic students attending local law schools and other non-lawyer associate members. Thus, consistent with the mission of our organization, we strongly urge you to pass the UDC DREAM Amendment Act of 2015.

We are available to you to provide additional information as you consider this Bill and we thank you for your attention on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Edgar Class
President
Hispanic Bar Association of DC



Jesus Saenz
Co-Chair, Legislative & Policy Issues Committee
Hispanic Bar Association of DC



Julian Gonzalez
Co-Chair, Legislative & Policy Issues Committee
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¹ See *Should Undocumented Immigrants Have Access to In-State Tuition?*, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Vol. 2, No. 6 (June 2005), available at [http://www.aascu.org/uploadedFiles/AASCU/Content/Root/PolicyAndAdvocacy/PolicyPublications/Undocumented_Students_Tuition\(3\).pdf](http://www.aascu.org/uploadedFiles/AASCU/Content/Root/PolicyAndAdvocacy/PolicyPublications/Undocumented_Students_Tuition(3).pdf) (last visited on October 5, 2016).

² Sixteen states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Texas, Utah and Washington – extend in-state tuition rates to undocumented students through state legislation.

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CC: Chairman Phil Mendelson
Councilmember Robert White Jr.
Councilmember Anita Bonds
Councilmember David Grosso
Councilmember Charles Allen
Councilmember Elissa Silverman
Councilmember LaRuby May