

It's time: Why Massachusetts should extend in-state tuition and state financial aid to all local high school graduates

S.817, H.1281 - Joint Committee on Higher Education

THE ISSUE

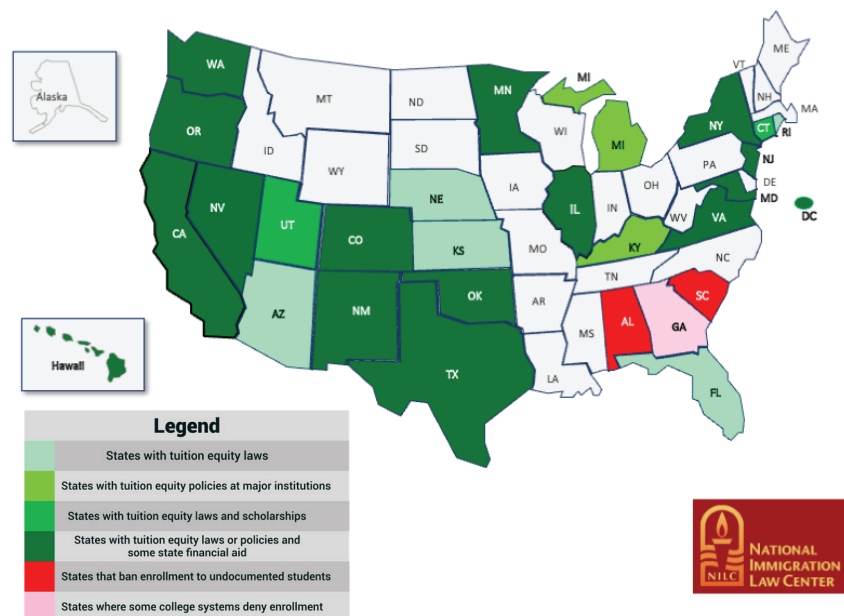
Tens of thousands of Massachusetts high school students graduate without the prospect of a college education because of their immigration status. Highly motivated students who have lived in our state all their lives must pay out-of-state tuition rates for public higher education (up to 4 times the in-state rate) without access to state financial aid, creating impossible barriers for low-income students.

THE SOLUTION

Two bills before the Legislature aim to close this opportunity gap: **The Tuition Equity Act, S.817** and **H.1281**, would qualify students for in-state tuition at our public colleges or universities if they attended a Massachusetts high school for at least three years and graduated or obtained their GED here, with some conditions. The Senate bill would also extend eligibility for state financial aid.

At least 23 states and D.C. have similar laws or policies. Thousands of current public school students – and many more graduates – could benefit.

State Laws & Policies on Access to Higher Education for Immigrants | November 2022



THE FACTS

- 1 in 6 state residents is foreign-born, and immigrants and their children make up a large share of public school enrollment in many districts.
- Massachusetts lacks these educational supports. While DACA and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders may qualify for in-state tuition, they make up a small fraction of the immigrant student population.
- ALL unauthorized students are ineligible for federal or state financial aid, no matter how long they've lived here.
- In Massachusetts, public higher education enrollment has declined by over 10% since 2015.
- Studies show that implementation costs are negligible. In-state tuition, while discounted, still brings in new revenue for colleges and universities.
- Tuition equity boosts academic achievement, reduces drop-out rates, increases college attendance, and raises student incomes and tax contributions.

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