

Resolution of Support for Financial Aid for Undocumented Immigrant Students

Submitted by: Professional Staff Congress

Whereas, New York is among nine states that allow undocumented immigrant students to pay in-state tuition at public colleges, and New York provides this benefit to undocumented students who attend a New York high school for two or more years, who graduate, and who apply to CUNY or SUNY within five years of receiving the diploma or GED; and

Whereas, since 2002, New York's policy has helped hundreds of talented students obtain a college education at CUNY and SUNY, to the enormous benefit of our state's and city's economy, community and social life; and

Whereas, many students enrolled at CUNY struggle to pay their tuition and fees, and may be forced to interrupt their education or drop out of college altogether for financial reasons; and

Whereas, the Congress has repeatedly failed to pass the federal DREAM Act, which would benefit these students and provide them with access to federal Pell Grants as well as temporary legal resident status and a path to citizenship; in the absence of federal legislation, California, New Mexico and Texas have adopted state laws to extend state-funded aid to undocumented college students in their states; and

Whereas, the New York State Board of Regents proposes that New York extend eligibility for the State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), Educational Opportunity Programs including SEEK and College Discovery, and other State-supported financial aid and loan programs, including the 529 program, to qualified undocumented immigrant students who graduate from a high school in New York State; and

Whereas, NYSUT and the Professional Staff Congress, a local within NYSUT, was a leader in the coalition that fought for the 2002 in-state tuition law and have worked closely with student organizations, immigrant rights organizations, labor unions and others for policies and law to improve the lives of immigrant students and their families; and

Whereas, NYSUT has consistently supported progressive TAP reform and passage of the federal Dream Act; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that NYSUT support the State Board of Regents' proposal to reform New York college financial aid programs and related measures to allow financial aid for undocumented immigrant students who qualify for in-state tuition so that they may obtain a college degree; and be it further

RESOLVED, that NYSUT and its higher education affiliates will work actively in coalition with student, labor, immigrant rights and other partners to enact the Regents' resolution.