

HB 59 and SB 458, “Destroying the DREAMS” Bills, Are Fundamentally Unjust and Economically Shortsighted

HB 59 and SB 458 would ban undocumented students, regardless of their academic credentials, from attending all 35 public universities and colleges as well as 26 in the Technical College System.

These bills are *economically shortsighted, fundamentally unjust, and unnecessary.*

Economically Shortsighted

- Denying higher education access to Georgia’s undocumented students fails to capitalize on the state’s investment in the students’ K-12 education.
- Many students may well regularize their status under current or future federal laws and are likely to remain in Georgia.
- Facilitating educational access to students also promotes economic growth. By increasing the number of college graduates who earn higher wages, Georgia generates significantly more income, sales, and property taxes.
- If these bills were to become law, undocumented students will not be able to utilize their full potential to advance the competitive edge of the state that is their home.

Fundamentally Unjust

- Banning access to public higher education to students who graduate from high school in Georgia violates principles of fundamental fairness recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1982 landmark case of *Plyler v. Doe*. Undocumented students are by and large talented high achievers who were brought to the U.S. as children by their parents. They persevered against the odds to earn their admission to college.
- Higher education is also increasingly essential to an individual’s potential and opportunity.

Unnecessary

- Only 501 of 310,000 students within the University System of Georgia were found to be undocumented per an investigation conducted by the Board of Regents. It is unwise to burden a great number of school administrators as well as students with authorized status with additional verification requirements in an attempt to exclude a small number of students who are otherwise qualified and paying their own way.
- In addition, allowing undocumented students to enroll in public colleges and universities in Georgia poses *no additional cost* to the state. These students are already paying out of state tuition which covers more than the cost of instruction