

ADVERTISEMENT

Immigrant grads rally for in-state tuition

1:06 AM, May. 20, 2012 | 28 Comments

Recommend

You recommend Immigrant grads rally for in-state tuition · Insights · Error

Recommend Confirm

Tweet 1

+1 0

Print Email Share A A +



A group of about 10 graduates and their supporters gathered on the steps of the Parthenon on Saturday, May 19 to call for tuition equality for undocumented students across Tennessee. / Submitted photo by Camilo Garcia

Written by
Nicole Young
The
Tennessean

@Nyoung80

Just hours before her graduation from John Overton High School, Arely Bravo, 19, stood on the steps of the Parthenon with about 50 other people and vowed to fight for tuition equality for all of Tennessee's students.

"Undocumented students have to pay out-of-state tuition even though they've been here since they were babies," said Bravo, whose parents brought her to Tennessee when she was about 5 years old. "We just want to be able to pay as much as any other student would to continue our education."

Bravo, who grew up in Metro schools, was one of about 10 students standing in cap and gown at the Parthenon on Saturday. She was scheduled to graduate later that evening in the top 20 percent of her class, she said. She plans to attend Nashville State

Follow the
Tennessean

On Twitter

On Facebook

FILED UNDER

News

News Education

HOBBY LOBBY EVERYDAY! SAVE SAVINGS. SHOP FREQUENTLY.

Got a Gift Card for Mother's Day?

40% OFF One Regular Price Item. **CLICK NOW!**

ADVERTISEMENT

Most Popular

Most Commented

More Headlines

1 Tennesseans show 'bittersweet' reaction to health law in Vanderbilt Poll

2 Tick-borne illnesses soar in TN

3 Talk of boutique hotel in Franklin is earnest

4 High schools see fewer home runs, more small ball with new bats

5 Vanderbilt poll: Obama closes gap with Romney

Most Viewed



Community [College](#) and major in criminal justice.

Other students aren't as lucky.

According to the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, an organizer of Saturday's event, undocumented

students are charged more than three times as much as their classmates to attend public universities in Tennessee. Because of the [financial](#) barriers, there is only a 5 percent to 10 percent college attendance rate for undocumented high school students, the coalition said.

Molly Sehring, a teacher at Glenclyff High School who has been with Metro Schools for 15 years, said she has seen the faces behind those statistics.

"Throughout my career, I've stood in the classroom and told every student that their education matters," she said. "That should

be true of every student, no matter their immigration status. We [invest](#) thousands of dollars in ... these students. We hold them accountable for achieving and graduating, and I believe they deserve equal access for higher education."

Every day, Sehring says, she talks to students who want to continue their education but feel that it's impossible. Other students rely on their families, who often go into debt trying to pay the inflated costs, she added.

"Many students feel like it is better to start working after graduation to help their families," Sehring said. "Out-of-state tuition is an impossible barrier for most of them."

Working harder

Some students, like Jonny Garcia, 18, who graduates from McGavock High School today, find a way.

Garcia, a distinguished honors student who is in the top 10 percent of his class, is planning to go to Western Kentucky University and major in architecture. He will pay in-state tuition there.

"I'm really not sure how it all works, but it's a really good option for me," he said. "I would love to stay in Tennessee, but I had to look outside the state to make it [work](#). It is very sad that we've spent 13 years in public schools here, and when we graduate, it all just



Dr Stephen Mullins defends the Walking Horse Industry the Huma...

May. 18, 2012



PHOTO GALLERIES



Savor Nashville



Rep on the River

[ITT Tech - Official Site](#)

100 + Locations & Online Programs
Official ITT Tech Site. Get Info!
www2.itt-tech.edu

AdChoices

comes to a halt and that's it.

"A lot of students in my situation think they can't go to school at all, but they can. We just have to work harder. I want to help those students get to college here. We're normal students like everyone else, and we want to succeed and give back to our community."

As a symbol of their promise to fight for future students, Garcia, Bravo and everyone else in attendance tied a blue ribbon around their left wrist.

Jay Steele, Metro's associate superintendent for high schools, publicly supported them during the event. Early last year, the Metro school board passed a resolution in support of the DREAM Act, a federal bill that would allow undocumented students to gain citizenship by continuing their education. The bill has not passed Congress.

Contact Nicole Young at 615-259-8091 or nyoung@tennessean.com.

[View Comments \(28\)](#) | [Share your thoughts »](#)

TOP VIDEO PICKS
selected by Taboola



MLK students modeled Goodwill-styled outfits t...
Mar 16, 2012



2012 Tennessee Titans Cheerleaders Finals A...
May 9, 2012



Humane Society releases graphic and d...
May 17, 2012

YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN

[POLL: Will you boycott Tennessee Walking Horse shows?](#) (The Tennessean)

[MPD: Homeless woman stabbed self, lied to police to get free place to stay](#) (The Tennessean)

[Body found in Williamson County ruled suicide](#) (The Tennessean)

[Celebrity Column: Dolly's Cracker Barrel venture turns to gold](#) (The Tennessean)

[Police search for suspect who robbed Antioch Subway](#) (The Tennessean)

[More SEC expansion coming, but where?](#) (The Tennessean)

SPONSORED LINKS

[The Truth Behind ADHD](#)
(Healthcommunities)

[Natural gas cars: A look under the hood](#) (ExxonMobil's Perspectives)

[11 Public Universities with the Worst Graduation Rates](#) (The Fiscal Times)

[Bounty Hunters Become the Prey After Busting Into the Wrong House](#) (AOL Jobs)

[7 Foods to Avoid If You Have Asthma](#) (HealthCentral.com)

[The Latest Countertop Trends](#)
(Cultivate)

[?]

[Grants for Women](#)

You May Qualify for Grants to Earn a Degree Online. Search Schools.
EducationConnection.com/GrantsInfo

AdChoices

ARCHIVES

View the last seven days

- [Yesterday, May. 20](#)
- [Saturday, May. 19](#)
- [Friday, May. 18](#)

EVENT CALENDAR

All events

DATA

MOST POPULAR

- [1. Tennesseans show 'bittersweet' reaction to health law in Vanderbilt Poll](#)
- [2. Tick-borne illnesses soar in TN](#)
- [3. Talk of boutique hotel in Franklin is earnest](#)

Thursday, May. 17
Wednesday, May. 16
Tuesday, May. 15
Monday, May. 14
See our paid archives for news older than a week.



Today's Traffic Incidents
Crime Map
Property Transfers
More data

4. Vanderbilt poll: Obama closes gap with Romney
5. David Climer: Tennessee walking horse treatment is abuse, not sport
6. High schools see fewer home runs, more small ball with new bats
7. Tennessee Walking Horse celebration keeps most sponsors



CORSAIR DISTILLERY
Chamber Member Since 2011

BUSINESS IS GOOD
Join the nashville area chamber

ADVERTISEMENT

THE TENNESSEAN

Site Map | Back to Top ^

NEWS

- Crime & Courts
- Government & Politics
- Politics Blog
- Local Data
- Faith & Values
- Education
- State News
- Nation & World
- Special Reports
- Today's Traffic

OBITUARIES

- Search Obituaries

COMMUNITIES

- Wilson
- Dickson
- Sumner
- Williamson
- Robertson
- Rutherford
- Ashland City
- Davidson

ENTERTAINMENT

- Event Calendar
- Music
- Restaurants & Dining
- Metromix
- Arts & Culture
- Crossword
- Sudoku

SPORTS

- Titans
- Predators
- UT
- Vanderbilt
- MTSU
- Colleges
- High Schools
- Motorsports
- Sports News

OPINION

- Editorials
- Letters to the Editor
- Live Chats
- Nashville Bloggers
- Brainstorm Nashville

BUSINESS

- Auto Industry
- Music Industry
- Real Estate
- Property Transfers
- Health Care
- Stocks
- Technology

LIFE

- Ms. Cheap
- Shopping Diva
- Society
- Nashville Lifestyles
- Travel
- Home & Garden
- Health & Fitness
- Food & Wine
- Weddings/Engagements

HELP

- Customer Services
- Feedback
- Staff Directory
- Place an Ad
- Submit a Letter
- Work for us
- Archives
- Buy a photo

FOLLOW US

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Mobile
- RSS
- E-mail Alerts
- Text Alerts

News | Jobs | Cars for Sale | Homes for Sale | Apartments for Rent | Real Estate | Shopping



GANNETT

Copyright © 2012 www.tennessean.com. All rights reserved.

Users of this site agree to the [Terms of Service](#), [Privacy Notice/Your California Privacy Rights](#), and [Ad Choices](#)