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TUESDAY, MAY 29, 2012

### EDUCATION What Do We Gain by Denying In-State Tuition to Undocumented Teen Scholars?

POSTED BY JIM RIDLEY ON TUE, MAY 29, 2012 AT 7:00 AM

Should the children of undocumented families be denied the in-state tuition rate to attend a state college? We're not even talking scholarships, just the chance to pay the same lowered rate as documented state residents. In *The City Paper*, Joey Garrison raises the question yet again with a particularly troubling story:

Diploma in hand, Johnny Garcia walked off the stage at McGavock High School's graduation and left behind a sparkling academic record. A 3.8 grade point average placed him in the top 10 percent of his senior class, earning him the title "distinguished scholar" from Metro. ...

But classroom success carried no meaning in his search to find affordable, in-state tuition to continue his education. Not in Tennessee.

Garcia, born in Mexico, arrived in the United States when he was 4. His residency in this country was unauthorized, however, and he became one of the estimated 70,000 undocumented students nationwide who graduate annually.

In Tennessee, undocumented students like him are not eligible for the state's in-state tuition at public universities. Lacking this financial tool makes the cost of higher education three times higher, he said, a price tag out of reach for him and other immigrant students.

"It's an investment that we've made and that the government has made to help go to K-12 education," Garcia said. "And then when it comes to the end, that's it. It's like those 13 years were just a waste. We went through the school system, only to not be able to afford to go to college."

So what does the state of Tennessee gain by denying Garcia that discounted rate?

Tags: immigrants, undocumented immigrants, in-state tuition, Tennessee state universities, McGavock High

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The real question here is, "Why is there out-of-state tuition at all? " There should be no difference in what in-state and out-of-state students pay for the same education. Besides, out-of-state students already pay more for room and board.



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Posted by njmuller on 05/29/2012 at 8:16 AM



Should we turn a blind eye to the legal in state resident who also made a 3.8 GPA who has to give up his or her spot for Garcia? Colleges have limited enrollments, while Mr. Garcia's efforts are admirable he is not at the end of his rope. The army provides a very quick way to full citizenship and will pay for his college. My question is... Why didn't his family may an effort for the 13 years to become legal?

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Posted by redrebel1776 on 05/29/2012 at 8:29 AM



Where is the gain? After 4 years of college he still cannot use his diploma for a legal job. Do we then have a headline "what do we gain by not allowing illegal aliens to use their diplomas"?

The primary question should be, how has this family managed to get away with occupying Nashville for so long without trying to become legal? Better yet, how many thousands of dollars have we spent educating a child that will not be able to legally work in our community?

I have never understood how the words "get legal" never entered into their economic flow charts.

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Posted by Moost on 05/29/2012 at 9:14 AM



They are here illegally so, blame dad and mom, kids are just caught in the middle of their illegal activity. Second, why is any illegal person attending any school at all to begin with? Why are we giving them free schooling, drivers license, free health care, car/truck tags, food stamps, etc? Free loading of the worst kind and us Americans are footing the bill. I am sick of it. Time, past time to end this madness and stop these give -a -ways. They shouldnt be able to buy a truck/car, get an apartment, buy a house, get a job without proving they are legal.

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Posted by Ron on 05/29/2012 at 9:45 AM



"I have never understood how the words "get legal" never entered into their economic flow charts."

That's an extremely ignorant comment Moost. Are you implying that undocumented workers here in Tennessee like having to look over their shoulder all the time? Are you saying they just love driving without a license and having to worry about spending a night in jail because of a broken tail light? If you have any knowledge of current immigration laws (and it's apparent you don't) you would know that unless you had the good fortune of being born in Cuba, or some other country that has a politically powerful expat community to make politicians quiver in their shoes, or have a lot of money, you aren't becoming legal if you weren't born here. At one point, this country made it a point of pride to be a magnet for the poor, huddled masses. If you came here without a dollar in your pocket, and landed at Ellis Island, you were welcomed. Sure there was rampant xenophobia, like there is today, but the government provided a path to citizenship. We don't anymore. It's become virtually impossible to get legal status here unless you are from a country that we give asylum to or if you have a lot of money.

So you don't like immigrants coming here? Just say it. Just dispense with the "they should work to become legal first" b.s. Because if that's what you want, you should support comprehensive immigration reform, something that some Republicans, like George W. Bush, have had the courage to support in a party that has become one of xenophobia instead.

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Posted by Chris Allen on 05/29/2012 at 9:45 AM

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