

# Adelante Education Coalition

## Access to Higher Education for Immigrant Students

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### NCCCS Policy Change Talking Points

#### **This policy change will strengthen our future tax base.**

It would give an opportunity to young people who have grown up in North Carolina, and been educated in NC public schools to obtain a higher education while also allowing our state to have access to the long-term economic benefits that these students can provide as a highly educated and bilingual workforce. This is about investing in the future of NC and the people who live, work and raise families here. Immigrant families are pulling more than their own weight when it comes to the taxes they pay, the contribution they are making to our growing economy, and what they bring to a diverse state like North Carolina. This is not about special rights; this is about not making the self-defeating mistake of cutting off the achievement and ability to succeed of our neighbors.

#### **This is a workforce development issue.**

North Carolina's state and local governments, businesses, and industry are currently recruiting college graduates from outside the state, as well as outside the US, to fill shortages in the fields of business, education, and health services. A number of students who will benefit from this policy change have the potential to satisfy many of these essential job needs in NC. Immigrants are here, are paying taxes, holding jobs, raising families, and most will be here for the rest of their lives. While it is good for the immigrants to get an education, it is even more important for all of us in North Carolina that they move up the economic ladder and become self-sufficient engines of the NC economy. Access to our state's colleges will increase the state's collective productivity and economic growth by preparing an educated workforce.

#### **These are qualified North Carolina students.**

According to the law, any student in North Carolina is entitled to a public school education until the 12th grade, meaning that our state has already invested significantly in their education. These are high school students who have attended elementary and secondary schools in this state for most of their lives, are likely to remain in the state and are high achieving and highly motivated. By allowing them to pursue higher education, the state can benefit from students who are bilingual and bicultural, and able to contribute to the state's collective productivity and economic growth.

#### **In-state tuition and federal immigration issues are separate issues from open enrollment admission.**

The recent policy change only impacts enrollment to Community Colleges; undocumented students must still pay out-of-state tuition, which is over \$2,000 more than the actual cost of educating the students.

This policy change reminds us of the need for federal comprehensive immigration reform, so that undocumented families that live, work and contribute to our society can receive legal documentation.