



M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

June 26, 2007

The Honorable Susan Bysiewicz
Secretary of the State
20 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Secretary Bysiewicz:

I am returning to you without my signature House Bill 5656, *An Act Concerning Access to Postsecondary Education*.

This bill would grant in-state student status to certain undocumented immigrants residing in Connecticut for purposes of determining tuition payments at the University of Connecticut, the State University System and the Regional Community-Technical Colleges. Eligible students must 1) reside in Connecticut, 2) have completed at least 4 years of high school level education in Connecticut, 3) have graduated from a high school in Connecticut or the equivalent, and 4) be registered as an entering student or enrolled at a public institution of higher education in Connecticut. In addition, it would require such students to file an affidavit with the college stating that the student has filed an application to legalize his or her immigration status, or will file such application as soon as he or she is eligible to do so.

The requirement that the student file an application to legalize his or her immigration status as soon as he or she is eligible to do so assumes, without extenuating circumstances, passage of immigration reform at the federal level. That is, if such a student were to file an application with the federal government prior to passage of immigration reform by the Congress, the student would, in essence, be notifying the government of his or her illegal status, thereby greatly increasing the likelihood of deportation. If Congress fails to enact meaningful immigration reform, which may be likely at this time, many of these students may never become eligible to legalize their status because they are not legal residents of the state of Connecticut or of the United States and there are few opportunities for illegal aliens to legitimize their residency.