



Written by [James Heiser](#) on November 17, 2010

Texas A&M Students Protest Tuition Break for Illegals

The effort to exclude illegal aliens from the benefits of “in-state” tuition rates has suffered a setback in California, as that state’s Supreme Court has overturned a lower-court ruling that would have required illegals to pay “out-of-state” rates. In Texas, however, the tuition struggle between legal and illegal residents is being fought out in a different venue: the student Senate at Texas A&M University.



[According to one press report](#), the position of the students’ representatives is very clear. The actions of the student Senate are non-binding on the university, but as Hilary Albrecht, the speaker of the Senate, told *The Battalion*:

The decision of the vote would not bind the University in any way, but it would reflect the opinion of the student body.... If the bill passes, it would recommend to Texas A&M University to lobby the state government to discontinue in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants.

Although the student body has no authority to exclude any illegal alien from having access to “in-state” tuition rates, by a 48-21 vote on November 3, the student Senate approved SB 63-11. The bill resolved:

- (1): That it is the opinion of the students of Texas A&M University that persons residing in the United States illegally should not receive in-state tuition at Texas A&M; and,
- (2): The Texas A&M Student Government Association, on behalf of the students of Texas A&M University, opposes any — current, proposed, or future — local, state, or federal legislation or law that would give in-state tuition to persons residing in the United States illegally; and,
- (3): That a copy of this legislation shall be sent to the following parties within 14 days of adoption:

Texas A&M University President Bowen Loftin,
TAMU VP for Governmental Relations Michael O’Quinn,
TAMUS Vice Chancellor for Governmental Relations Stanton Calvert
Texas A&M System Board of Regents,
Texas Governor Rick Perry,
Texas State Representative Fred Brown,
Texas State Senator Steve Ogden,
U.S. Congressman Chet Edwards, and
United States President Barack Obama.

Despite the overwhelming support for SB 63-11 within the student Senate, Student Body President Jacob Robinson vetoed the bill, maintaining it was the responsibility of the Texas Legislature to address the problem of illegal immigration.



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The issue of subsidizing the tuition of illegal aliens is such a concern to A&M students because of the enormous subsidy that the state provides for Texans. According to a “Brief on Senate Bill 63-11”:

In-state tuition at Texas A&M costs roughly \$5,200, while out-of- state tuition runs \$19,600 per year. Studies put Texas’ cost of educating undocumented students as high as \$1.65 billion a year, an expense that easily outpaces other costs associated with illegal immigration, such as medical and criminal justice services. The cost of illegal immigration to Texas’ public schools jumps to about \$4 billion a year, according to one study, when the immigrants’ children — some of whom were born in the United States and are, therefore, citizens — are counted. In return, their families contribute nearly \$1 billion to the state sales and property tax coffers.

According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board during the fall semester of 2009, 12,138 students (about 1 percent of all Texas college students) benefited from the state law granting in-state tuition, and there are currently 304 illegal aliens attending Texas A&M University. The cost of these illegal students cost the state of Texas nearly \$60 million per year.

Texas taxpayers subsidize education at Texas A&M University at 27% of the operating budget. Furthermore, Texas awarded about \$33.6 million in state and institutional financial aid to those students between fall 2004 and summer 2008.

Texas is one of nine states that allows illegal aliens who have graduated from high schools within the state to receive “in-state” tuition rates — in fact, Texas even provides financial aid to such students.

[Arizona State University’s News21 reports:](#)

Nine states that have passed laws that allow undocumented high school graduates to receive in-state tuition rates. They are California, New Mexico, Kansas, Nebraska, Illinois, New York, Texas, Utah and Washington. Both New Mexico and Texas also offer state financial aid to the undocumented.

Arizona, Oklahoma, Georgia and South Carolina have passed laws to prevent undocumented students from receiving in-state tuition and state financial aid....

Federal financial aid is only offered to legal residents.

Jose Luis, an education major at Texas A&M University, is happy to be a Texan. Jose came to the United States with his family on a temporary visa when he was 14 years old. He began attending public schools and became the first in his family to graduate from high school. Thanks to a 2005 state law known as SB 1528, Jose was able to afford college. The law allows all high school graduates in Texas — as well as international students — to receive in-state tuition and state financial aid.

But being a Texan — or an American, for that matter — is not a matter of sentiment, but of citizenship. If there is to be a respect for the rule of law, the rights and privileges of citizenship require the duties of citizenship. Gov. Rick Perry’s signature on SB 1528 severed the vital link between rights and duties; his fellow Aggies are endeavoring, by means of SB 63-11, to call the Governor back to that fundamental understanding of the character of citizenship.

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