

October 1st, 2007

Governor Deval L. Patrick
Massachusetts State House
Office of the Governor
Room 360
Boston, MA 02133

Honorable Governor Patrick,

We, the undersigned, believe all students – regardless of immigration status – should be able to attend college at the same tuition rates as their Massachusetts high school classmates. We ask that you commit to including language ensuring equal access to in-state tuition rates in the final recommendations of the Commonwealth Readiness Project.

Every year, students who have grown up in Massachusetts and excelled in our schools are unable to pursue their dreams of higher education because they are not eligible to pay resident tuition rates at public institutions of higher education. These students are part of the 400-600 graduating seniors in Massachusetts who are being prohibited from the opportunity to pay college tuition at Massachusetts' resident rates due to their immigration status. Yet, by simply allowing equal access to in-state tuition rates, we can ensure that this barrier to higher education does not continue to discriminate against students of our Commonwealth.

As another year of high school graduations will approach we are deeply saddened at the prospect that yet another year may pass by without providing all immigrant students equal access to pursue their dreams of higher education.

As leaders in the civic, business, labor and education communities, we recognize that equal access to in-state tuition rates is not only about fairness and equality for *all* Massachusetts high school students, but that it is about good economic policy for our state: providing in-state tuition rates for immigrant students will benefit our state economy, as these students are able to develop new skills and advance their careers, allowing them to earn more and contribute more to the state in taxes.

We know you believe in equal access to education for all Massachusetts students. Now, we respectfully request your leadership in supporting immigrant students of our Commonwealth by:

- 1) Committing to including language ensuring equal access to in-state tuition rates for all immigrant students in the final recommendations of the Commonwealth Readiness task force.
- 2) Providing equal access to the John and Abigail Adams scholarship for all Massachusetts students who earn this honor.

We look forward to your leadership in addressing this barrier to higher education and providing a solution to ensuring equal access to higher education for *all* immigrant students.

Sincerely,

Cc: Commonwealth Readiness Project, distinguished Chairs and Leadership Council members