

Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy Signs Tuition Equality Legislation for Children of H-1B Visa Holders

01/21/2020

**TRENTON** - Governor Phil Murphy today signed S2555, allowing New Jersey students who are children of H-1B visa holders to qualify for in-state tuition at public institutions of higher education.

"New Jerseyans deserve equal access to higher education, and today we are taking another step toward making that possible," **said Governor Murphy**. "I'm proud to sign the legislation to help our students achieve their education goals, pursue a successful future, and live their dreams here in their home state."

S2555 exempts dependent students whose parents or guardians hold H-1B visas from paying out-of-state tuition provided they meet certain criteria, including having graduated from a New Jersey high school and having attended a New Jersey high school for at least three years.

"We are working to make college affordable for New Jerseyans and the Governor's action today will expand postsecondary opportunities to more residents, such as dependents of H-1B visa holders," **said Secretary of Higher Education Zakiya Smith Ellis**.

"Leveling the playing field by making higher education more affordable for children of H-1B visa holders is not only the right thing to do, but also makes sense from an economic development standpoint," **said NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan**. "This bill signing comes less than a week after the Governor unveiled his JOBS NJ talent plan and will help to bolster New Jersey's workforce. Talent is the 21st century's most precious commodity and the Garden State's highly-knowledgeable workers and world-class universities are among our biggest assets as we work to create a stronger and fairer New Jersey economy."

"We applaud the enactment of this legislation, which will make college more affordable for talented students who attended a New Jersey high school for at least three years and graduated, by enabling them to enroll in a New Jersey public college or university at the same in-state tuition rate that is charged to their classmates," **said David Socolow, Executive Director of the NJ Higher Education Student Assistance Authority**.

Primary sponsors of the legislation include Senators Vin Gopal and M. Teresa Ruiz, and Assemblymembers Raj Mukherji, Daniel Benson, and Robert Karabinchak.

"When someone comes to New Jersey on an H-1B visa, they're bringing their own unique expertise, intellect, and insight to the challenges and opportunities our state faces," **said Senator Gopal**. "But when we deny their children the opportunity to access an affordable college education right here at home, we're shutting the door on a whole new generation of brilliance and talent. When we make higher education more affordable for these kids, we're supporting their academic pursuits while encouraging them to cultivate and apply their skills right here in the Garden State."

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"H-1B visas have one of the longest waitlists for citizenship and unfortunately, until now, if a student's parent has an H-1B visa they were ineligible for in-state tuition," **said Senator Ruiz**. "This law will make the dream of achieving a college degree a reality for many around the state by allowing them to access in-state tuition rates. This legislation will make college more accessible and help to encourage more New Jersey students to pursue college in the state."

"Individuals who are here through an H-1B visa could be here for many years with their families, raising their children in the state," **said Assemblymembers Mukherji, Benson, and Karabinchak**. "Broadening access to our colleges and universities in-state tuition is worthy of the specialty work and type of service they have committed to while living in New Jersey."

"This is landmark legislation that reflects New Jersey's role in the global economy, the diversity of our state, and will help our talented students to participate in our world-class educational institutions," **said Satish Poondi, attorney at Wilentz**.

"I would like to congratulate Governor Murphy and the Legislature on passing this important piece of legislation," **said Deepak Raj, Chair of the State Investment Council**. "Immigrants come to the United States not only with a dream of a better life for themselves, but for their children. With this bill, we're ensuring that our younger generations have the resources they deserve to realize their own dreams."

"This country is one of the best in the world for top talent to find opportunities to study and produce innovations for the country and the world," **said Balaji Sankaran, CEO of Alphaori Technologies**. "As a first generation immigrant who has gone through the entire process to now becoming a permanent resident, I can vouch that this bill will be a HUGE support for H1 families to provide better education for their kids and create amazing productive future citizens."

"I applaud the Governor's signing of S2555," **said Rajiv D. Parikh, Esq., Partner, Genova Burns LLC**. "Making New Jersey more attractive to companies by offering in-state tuition to children of their H1B employees is a commonsense move that will only further strengthen our economy in critical sectors and broaden the multiplier effect for our economy as a whole."

"As a Professor, I see how college affordability affects students' academic performance and how college debt limits their choices in adulthood," **said Dr. Khyati Y. Joshi, Professor of Education at Fairleigh Dickinson University whose research area is Immigration and South Asian Americans**. "The young people who will benefit from this bill have lived in New Jersey most of their lives. We've invested in their K-12 education, and it's smart to continue the investment of keeping them here in New Jersey."

"The Indian diaspora welcomes this bill since H1B visa holders pay enormous amounts of taxes as well as Social Security contributions which they are never able to use as they return to India before they are eligible to receive benefits," **said Arthur Kapoor, President and CEO of HealthEC**. "This bill will allow their kids access to the best education in our great state of New Jersey. Kudos to Governor Murphy for signing this important bill."

"While waiting to get approval on their green cards, these H-1B students parents are also taxpayers," **said Jerry Shi, Edison School Board Member**. "Providing their children with in state tuition will help reducing the burden of college tuition for the studies and their parents at the same time allowing the state to keep the talent in NJ."

"When someone comes to New Jersey on an H-1B visa, they're bringing their own unique expertise, intellect, and insight to the challenges and opportunities our state faces," **said Senator Gopal**. "But when we deny their children the opportunity to access an affordable college education right here at home, we're shutting the door on a whole new generation of brilliance and talent. When we make higher education more affordable for these kids, we're supporting their academic pursuits while encouraging them to cultivate and apply their skills right here in the Garden State."

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