



**The School District
of Greenville County**
Board of Trustees

February 15, 2019

Sen. Ross Turner, Chairman
Greenville County Legislative Delegation
301 University Ridge, Suite 2400
Greenville, SC 29601

Dear Sen. Turner:

In February 2018, the members of the Greenville County School Board of Trustees passed a resolution calling on the South Carolina General Assembly to pass legislation removing state occupational licensing barriers for our students who are lawfully present in our State as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals students or DACA Students. Since then, we have worked closely with the Greenville Chamber of Commerce and other local government agencies to link education and workforce development efforts.

As you know, this past December, Representative Neal Collins pre-filed H.3404, which would provide immigrant youth, lawfully present in South Carolina, access to in-state tuition, certain merit-based scholarships, and occupational licenses. This bill has the bipartisan support of 18 co-sponsors, including 11 members of the House Judiciary Committee. Senators Hutto and Jackson recently filed a companion legislation in the Senate. We ask you to please support these bills because they will help industries fill job vacancies and provide a return on our investment for the millions we are spending in K-12 public education for a segment of our workforce currently being forced to leave South Carolina to obtain a college degree or to obtain an occupational licensing. Unfortunately, after these students receive their college degree or occupational license they will probably not return to South Carolina. Facts to consider in supporting this legislation are:

- There are 7,266 DACA Students in South Carolina.
- A DACA Student must have entered the country between birth and age 16 prior to 2007. Thus, the group is closed both on the front-end and back-end. To apply, a Dreamer must submit a background check; fingerprints; photos; proof of enrollment in school, employment, or military service; and a fee of \$495 every two years.
- Approximately, one third of DACA Students are in our K-12 system.
- We are constitutionally mandated to offer public education to students regardless of their immigration status. (*Plyler v. Doe* U.S. Supreme Court 1982).
- DACA Students in Greenville County Schools are prevented from earning industry certifications and professional licenses in more than 40 occupations,



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- including welding, nursing, dental hygiene, optometry, physical therapy, social work, plumbing, mental health counseling, teaching and cosmetology.
- Many local industries cannot fill their workforce needs with qualified individuals.
 - The General Assembly's decision in 2008 to bar DACA Students from earning state professional and occupational licenses results in those students taking the knowledge and skills they built in Greenville County Schools to other states where they can earn certifications and work.

South Carolina is investing over a hundred thousand dollars in the K-12 public education system for each DACA Student, and then effectively exporting that human capital out of state by legislating obstacles to higher education and to higher-earning careers for these students. On a personal note, my family has first-hand knowledge of this very issue. A young adult, in our country legally, educated in our schools, living with our family, and unable to secure a higher paying job because our state will not provide her with the professional certification needed.

H.3404 and S.431 can address these concerns. When appropriate, we would appreciate the opportunity to discuss other items contained in these bills, for now we ask for your support of our concerns.

We would believe that this letter, and our attached resolution, make a strong case for your consideration from an economic development standpoint, and at the end of the day it is the right thing to do for our children and the State.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Chuck Saylor, Chair
Greenville County Schools Board of Trustees