

# **Immigrant advocates praise California governor for action on DREAM Act**

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles and immigrant advocate groups praised Gov. Jerry Brown for signing into law the rest of the California DREAM Act, allowing undocumented students who have graduated from a California high school to apply for state financial aid to attend college at a state school.

Brown signed the first half of the measure in July to make immigrant students attending California State University, California community colleges or the University of California eligible, on or after Jan. 1, 2012, to receive scholarships and loans from private funds.

Brown announced Oct. 8 he had signed the rest of the measure allowing them to apply for state aid.

“The governor’s signature clears the path for immigrant students to further their education so that they can one day contribute their talents and skills to the betterment of our society,” Archbishop Gomez said in a statement released that day.

“These students have already demonstrated their academic ability and commitment; they deserve the opportunity to pursue their goals for the future,” he added.

Under current law, undocumented immigrant students who have graduated from a California high school after attending the school for three or more years and can prove they’re on the path to legalize their immigration status can pay resident tuition rates.

The California DREAM Act, or the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act had the support of the California Catholic Conference, the public policy arm of the state’s Catholic bishops.

Among other groups that applauded Brown for his action was Voto Latino, a nonpartisan group that promotes voter registration among Latinos ages 18 and up.

“California today made a wise investment in its future,” said Maria Teresa Kumar, the organization’s executive director.

Brown and state lawmakers “showed vision and bravery by legislating with an eye on the future of the state’s workforce and economy,” she said. “California has already invested in these students’ education. Today’s signing assures they will be able to deliver a return on that investment by becoming California’s entrepreneurs, engineers and doctors.”

One critic of the measure, Assemblyman Tim Donnelly, a Republican from Hesperia, told The Associated Press the new law was “fundamentally wrong and unfair,” calling it an insult to people who have “played by the rules” and entered the United States legally.

According to Donnelly, polls show that between 80 percent and 90 percent of Californians, both Democrats and Republicans, are against the DREAM Act.

Assemblyman Gil Cedillo, a Los Angeles Democrat who sponsored the bill, and other supporters of the law say that students brought illegally to the United States by their parents when they were children should not be penalized by being denied financial aid and having to pay out-of-state tuition.