

New Jersey Catholic Conference

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Position Statement of the New Jersey Catholic Conference on S-1036/A-194

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The New Jersey Catholic Conference supports the passage of S-1036/A-194, this legislation will allow certain undocumented immigrant students to attend higher education institutions at instate tuition rates. Currently, these students would have to pay double and in some cases triple the tuition rate, making it extremely expensive to pursue higher education. These students are not eligible for financial aid, scholarships, or grants. This legislation would simply allow them to pay the same tuition amount that their high school student peers are allowed to pay.

As a provider of education to thousands of children and young adults, the Catholic Church has witnessed the suffering of young persons who through no fault of their own, reside in an undocumented status and are denied access to legal status in this country and an opportunity to continue their education. These students were brought to this country by their parents. Often families come here fleeing political and economic instability in their countries of origin. It is not the students who made the actual decision of coming to the United States, their parents did. Nevertheless, despite facing many obstacles, these students have worked hard and succeeded in school, and New Jersey should reward them for their hard work, their initiative, and their desire to pursue higher education to become productive members of our communities. In many, instances New Jersey is the only place they really remember, where they have their friend and feel at home.

The New Jersey Catholic Conference believes a student that has lived in New Jersey for some time, and graduated from a public or non-public school should be given the opportunity to pursue their dream of obtaining a higher education degree. Instate tuition would give these young people an opportunity to meet their potential and to fully contribute to our society.

We urge you to resist the voices of dissension and fear and vote yes on A194/A990.