

Taking away immigrant students' chance to 'Dream'

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Body

I read with outrage the statements of Maryland House Minority Leader Anthony J. O'Donnell (R-Calvert) on the Maryland "**DREAM**" act ["Md. to weigh own '**DREAM**' tuition act," Metro, Dec. 30]. He argued against giving in-state college tuition benefits to undocumented **immigrants** who have attended Maryland high schools.

As a recent graduate of a Prince George's County high school, I know from personal experience what the state is missing by not encouraging talented **immigrant students** to attend college here.

I am a U.S. citizen and lifelong Maryland resident, now attending the University of Maryland. A close friend of mine came to the United States from China when he was 8 years old. In his time here, he learned to speak English and adopted American values. We **took** AP American Government together. When he returned to China for a visit, he was repulsed by the corruption, censorship and the absence of democracy he saw there.

Yet, because of his parents' inability to navigate the immigration system in the United States, he was unable to get U.S. citizenship. After our senior year of high school, he left for Canada, where he became a citizen and is now attending the University of Toronto. He's in the school's prestigious engineering science program.

Our state and, indeed, our country, have lost an intelligent **student** who believed in the American system as much as any citizen and who could have contributed much to this country.

I've met other **immigrant students**, and I believe that **students** who have grown up in the United States and attended our schools become part of our culture. Their hearts and minds belong to America, as much as those of native-born Americans do. Why should we treat them any differently?

Maia Werbos, College Park

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