

## **PERDUE ON ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS: In-state tuition possible, but not HOPE funds**

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### **Body**

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Gov. Sonny **Perdue** said he is "amenable" to letting children of **illegal immigrants** pay **in-state tuition** at Georgia's public colleges and universities. But he ruled out offering **HOPE** scholarships to **illegal immigrants**.

**Perdue** also said he would **not** support measures that would permit **illegal immigrants** to obtain Georgia driver's licenses.

He made the remarks when he met with reporters from the Spanish-language press last week --- the Republican governor's first foray at reaching the Latino community through the media since he has been **in** office.  
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**In** separate meetings with broadcast and newspaper reporters and during a taped session with attorney Ralph Perales, host of WPBA's "Leyes Cotidianas," ("Everyday Law"), **Perdue** answered questions about issues affecting the Hispanic community.

While giving a thumbs down to driver's licenses, **Perdue** provided a glimmer of **hope** for students who were brought to the United **States** illegally and who have graduated from Georgia schools.

"I would be amenable to looking for solutions regarding **in-state tuition** provided the fact that those students can document that they've been here **in** the **state** over a period of time, that they've **not** just moved here," **Perdue** said Friday.

"If they've been here, they've been Georgia taxpayers and can provide that kind of documentation, I'd be amenable to solutions of the **in-state tuition** area," he said.

Three years ago, the Georgia Board of Regents issued a memorandum saying there is no legal barrier to **illegal immigrants** attending college if they "attend or graduate" from Georgia high schools.

But system officials said students who were **in** the country illegally would probably have to pay out-of-**state tuition** -- a cost that is often four times more than what **state** residents pay.

At least three dozen **illegal immigrants in state** colleges last year attended with "presidential waivers" that allowed them to pay **in-state tuition**.

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**State** Rep. Pedro Marin (D-Duluth) said the governor's statements on tuition would be "an opportunity for us to sit around the table and get people involved in the discussion. We need to have a more educated community. We are losing our kids to gangs, because kids don't have something to look forward to. They lose interest in school before they are finished --- in sophomore and freshman year."

But **Perdue** said HOPE scholarships for illegal immigrants are not likely.

"The HOPE scholarship and its future is under duress right now," **Perdue** said. "Expansion of the HOPE program at this point is probably not realistic."

On driver's licenses for illegal immigrants, **Perdue** said he could not "justify issuing Georgia driver's licenses to those without documents, who are undocumented." He said he viewed the issue as "a national issue and as an immigration issue that we have asked our Congress to look at and to come up with ideas."

Here are excerpts from **Perdue's** discussion with the journalists on other issues affecting the Latino community:

Q: What do you think of the matricula consular (identification cards issued by consular officials to their citizens in the United States regardless of their immigration status)?

A: I would entertain its acceptance, certainly in the commerce of banking and bank accounts and those kinds of things. We probably would like to have more certainty regarding the integrity of it, making sure that it's non-counterfeitable, that it's a valid document.

Q: What do you expect from the Latino Commission for a New Georgia, and who on the commission speaks for the blue-collar workers?

A: I think all of them speak for the blue-collar workers, because most of them have been there themselves at some point or another. I think there is a great sense of responsibility to the greater Latino community here. I would hope that we would have a candid, forthright dialogue and exchange of ideas, issues, needs and solutions back and forth between the Latino community and the governor's office.

## Graphic

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Photo: Gov. Sonny **Perdue** opposes driver's licenses for illegal immigrants.

## Classification

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