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**In-State Tuition for Undocumented Students  
Policy Development 2015**

**Issue:**

Education plays an important role in the social behavior of any society. However, in Tennessee there are children who are not legal citizens because they were born out of country and may have been relocated to the United States at a very young age. These students may have a successful academic record with potential for a productive career. They are eligible to attend a state university but because of their legal status must pay out-of-state tuition even if they meet the Tennessee residency requirements.

**Questions:**

1. Should a child of an illegal immigrant be placed in the same legal circumstance as the parents who came into the U.S. illegally?
2. Would access to higher education solve some of the social issues that accompany the large influx of undocumented children brought into the U.S.?
3. Should Farm Bureau support allowing these children to pay in-state tuition if they meet certain requirements?
4. What are those requirements?

**Background:**

Legislation being considered by the Tennessee General Assembly would allow students brought into the country to pay in-state tuition under certain requirements. According to the Census Bureau's 2010 American Community Survey (ACS), the U.S. immigrant population stood at almost 40 million, or 13 percent of the total U.S. population of 309.3 million. According to a 2012 Census Bureau estimate, Tennessee has an immigrant population of 291,641 people. However, a certain amount of this population may be considered undocumented.

Children of undocumented parents are guaranteed access to K-12 education through federal law. There are students who attend Tennessee schools, graduate from Tennessee high schools, and want to go on to become productive residents in Tennessee. There are examples of high school valedictorians that were considered undocumented. However, these children must pay out of state tuition, even if they attend and graduate from a Tennessee high school.

There is a federal process called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) for children to become lawfully in the U.S. Under DACA, the individual is authorized to live in the U.S. for two years, receive a social security number, and the opportunity to apply for a work permit. With work permits and social security numbers, the students can apply for professional licenses, driver licenses, bank accounts, credit cards, etc. The individual must renew their DACA status every two years. This does not give the student citizenship however, it does allow a student to work and pay taxes through a limited social security number. The legislation would require a student to be enrolled in this program and meet Tennessee residency requirements to be eligible for in-state tuition.

In 2012, young adults with a bachelor's degree earned more than twice as much as those without a high school credential (\$46,900 vs. \$22,900) and 57 percent more than young adult high school completers (\$46,900 vs. \$30,000). College degrees are something that enables a young adult to potentially earn more income, get a better job, and be better prepared for that job.

**TFBF Policy:**

**Education (Partial)**

Educational opportunities for Tennessee's young people should be improved. Farm Bureau members must provide active leadership throughout the educational system. Leaders should acquaint themselves with courses of study and textbooks. Farm Bureau parents should lead the careful consideration of new programs.