



**Texas Latino Education Coalition**

**Testimony Opposing SB 2119, which Proposes Elimination of the Texas Top Ten Percent Plan, before the Senate Higher Education Committee, April 5, 2017**

Dear Chairman Seliger and Committee Members,

Thank you for hearing our testimony today. The Texas Latino Education Coalition (TLEC) is a collaborative of organizations that advocates for the rights of Latino students at the local, state and national levels. The coalition was organized to focus on critical educational issues in Texas and to improve the state of education for Latino students in public schools, including higher education access and success.

Since 1997, the Top Ten Percent Plan has proven to be a strong legislative policy that benefits students in Texas cities and rural counties alike. The Top Ten Percent Plan works as a race-neutral approach that ensures that our public universities reflect the racial and economic diversity across Texas that our future depends upon.

The number of Top Ten Percent Plan applications by students of color has steadily increased over the years. Between 2009 and 2015, **African American student applications to state universities increased by 30 percent and Hispanic student applications increased by 45 percent.**<sup>1</sup> Increasing numbers has meant more Texans enrolling in universities statewide, which enhances our local economy and workforce. In the fall of 2009, 16,186 Texans enrolled under the Top Ten Percent Plan. In 2015, the number increased to 20,561 – **a 27 percent jump in Top Ten Percent Plan students.**

Over the past eight years, **students from the Gulf Coast region, which includes Senator Creighton's district, have consistently accounted for at least 25 percent of Top Ten Percent Plan enrollment in Texas universities.** Another **25 percent came from the DFW Metroplex area, and South Texas students made up over 20 percent of statewide Top Ten Percent Plan enrollment.**<sup>2</sup> In the fall of 2015 alone, the proportion of students enrolling in college through the Top Ten Percent Plan from the High Plains region, in Chairman Seliger's district, **more than doubled over the last four years.** Overall, Top Ten Percent Plan accounts for over a quarter of the state's public university enrollment.

Projections show that **by 2020, 59 percent of jobs in Texas will require post-secondary training or education.** Higher educational attainment is correlated with a state's workforce productivity, increasing wages and tax base. We have made college and career readiness a standard to strive for in our K-12 schools, so why strip away a policy that has increased college access and competition for students across the state?

Elimination of the Top Ten Percent Plan is counter-productive to Texas's economic future and educational goals. SB 2119 would reverse course on our state's progress and on our fairer treatment of qualified, resilient but underserved students across Texas. The Texas Latino Education Coalition urges you to vote no on SB 2119.

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<sup>1</sup> Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2016). Texas Top 10% High School Graduates Found in Texas Public Higher Education: Fall 2009-2015 Cohorts. Available at: <http://www.theceb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/8714.PDF?CFID=57848489&CFTOKEN=98563475>  
Available at: <http://www.theceb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/8714.PDF?CFID=57848489&CFTOKEN=98563475>