



# Changes to the Texas Dream Act Would Discourage and Dissuade Texas Students from College Dreams

IDRA Testimony against CSHB 232, submitted by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., to the Texas House Committee on Higher Education, April 29, 2025

Dear Chair Wilson and Honorable Members of the Committee:

My name is Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D. I am the deputy director of policy at IDRA, an independent, non-partisan non-profit committed to achieving equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

IDRA opposes the committee substitute to House Bill 232 because it would exclude Texas Dreamers, who are graduates of Texas high schools, from opportunities to pursue their college and career dreams here. CSHB 232 severely and unwisely restricts effective, longstanding, and bipartisan law and threatens students with potential tuition backpay of tens of thousands of dollars and deportation for attempting to further their education at a Texas college.

## Texas Led the Way to Make College Dreams a Reality for All Texas Students

In 2001, the Texas Legislature, led by then-Governor Rick Perry, passed House Bill 1403 to revise the state's higher education residency laws. The new law allowed a student to be classified as a Texas resident if the student graduated from a Texas high school and resided continuously in Texas for three years leading up to high school graduation (Tex. Educ. Code § 54.052(a)(3)).

Notably, **Texas was the first state in the nation to adopt this visionary framework**, which recognized both the opportunity and responsibility of capitalizing on the potential of every Texan who completed high school in our state (Every Texan, 2023).

## Limiting the Texas Residency Affidavit to Students Applying for Permanent Residency Excludes Qualified College Applicants

Under current law, Texas high school graduates are assessed on their academic achievements and contributions for college admission. Yet, CSHB 232 restricts students applying through the affidavit pathway to those who are eligible to apply for legal permanent residency. This creates an expensive and exclusive pathway that not all these students are eligible to complete.

The bill further adds a major disincentive for students with financial penalties and risk of deportation if their applications for permanent residency are denied – a process that can take up to seven years or longer, well past their graduation dates. Qualified Texas students should not be dissuaded from pursuing college dreams, and Texas college graduates should not have to risk deportation to get a degree.

## Recommendations

The committee should reject CSHB 232 and instead prioritize policies and practices that enhance

equal educational opportunity for all Texans and promote a strong Texas workforce and communities.

IDRA is available for any questions or further resources that we can provide. Thank you for your consideration. For more information, please contact me at [chloe.sikes@idra.org](mailto:chloe.sikes@idra.org).

## Resources

American Immigration Council. (March 20, 2023). The Economic Cost of Repealing In-State Tuition in Texas.

<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/economic-cost-repealing-state-tuition-texas>

Every Texan. (May 2023). Texas Dream Act Report. <https://everytexan.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Texas-Dream-Act-fact-sheet-May2023.pdf>

House Research Organization. (2005). Bill Analysis, S.B. 1528, 79 Leg., Reg. Sess.

IDRA. (2022). Brief of Amicus Curiae Texas Business Leadership Council et al. <https://idra.news/Amicus-w-UNT>

IDRA. (2025). Texas Must Prepare All Students to Succeed in College. IDRA Policy Digest.

[https://www.idra.org/education\\_policy/texas-must-prepare-all-students-to-succeed-in-college/](https://www.idra.org/education_policy/texas-must-prepare-all-students-to-succeed-in-college/)

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (July 23, 2015). 60x30 Texas: Texas Higher Education Strategic Plan 2015-2030. <https://reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/agency-publication/miscellaneous/the-cb-60x30-strategic-plan/>

*IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization led by Celina Moreno, J.D. Our mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.*