

# Immigration advocates win and lose

---

By **Rodrigo Arriaza** | AP February 1

RICHMOND, Va. — Virginia colleges won't be forced to give federal authorities sensitive details about students who may be undocumented immigrants, after a legislative subcommittee killed a bill opposed by immigration advocates.

However, another panel killed legislation that immigration advocates had wanted: It would have allowed eligible undocumented students to pay in-state college tuition.

The House Higher Education Subcommittee voted Tuesday to kill HB 2001 and HB 2004, which were aimed at gathering personal information about undocumented college students. Both measures were sponsored by Del. Charles R. Poindexter, R-Franklin County.

The subcommittee also voted to refer HB 1857, the in-state tuition proposal, to the House Appropriations Committee. On Wednesday, an Appropriations subcommittee killed the bill, which was sponsored by Del. Alfonso Lopez, D-Arlington.

HB 2001 would have required college and university officials and faculty members to cooperate with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in identifying and detaining undocumented students. HB 2004 would have required state colleges and universities to file annual reports to the governor and General Assembly on the number of undocumented students enrolled in their institutions.

Dozens of opponents of Poindexter's legislation attended the subcommittee's meeting, filling the seats in the room and spilling out into the hallway. They included pro-immigrant activists, professors and young people protected from deportation under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

DACA was the Obama administration's 2012 executive order allowing young undocumented immigrants to work, pay taxes, drive and attend college with in-state tuition. The Trump administration has vowed to overturn the policy.

"By requiring that professors and other employees at public institutions cooperate with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers, you force DACA students to go back into hiding," said Allison Esquen-Roca, a DACA student at the College of William and Mary. "You also force us to lose one of the last lines of support that we have, and create a hostile environment not conducive to learning."

Catherine Carey, a Williamsburg resident who started an online petition that has garnered more than 2,640 signatures against HB 2001, also spoke against the legislation. She said the bills would ruin any trust between professors and students.

“If we have teachers enforcing immigration law, that is going to destroy the relationship between students and teachers,” Carey said. “No one wants a teacher acting as a policeman in the classroom.”

At the start of the meeting, Poindexter asked that HB 2004 be stricken, essentially withdrawing it. But he defended HB 2001, saying he wanted to make sure colleges follow federal law.

“I heard a statement that was very disturbing, and I think it should disturb everyone in the room: ‘We don’t want the law enforced.’ That is incomprehensible in the United States of America,” Poindexter said. “I understand opposition to the bill, but to say that we don’t want the law enforced in incomprehensible.”

The subcommittee also decided to refer Lopez’ proposal, HB 1857, to the House Appropriations Committee. That bill seeks to ensure that DACA recipients can continue paying in-state tuition in Virginia.

According to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, there are 1,280 undocumented students enrolled in colleges throughout Virginia, Lopez said. He said college would not be a realistic option for many of these students if they had to pay out-of-state tuition.

“States are required to provide all students with a K-12 education regardless of immigration status,” Lopez said. Unless the state takes action, “we will essentially be putting up a stop sign to these children, saying, ‘Thank you for your hard work, thank you for doing well in school, but your dreams need to stop.’ This is devastating for future social and economic mobility.”

Lopez said denying in-state tuition to undocumented students would be a waste of the money that the state has invested in their primary and secondary education.

“To nurture and educate these students from elementary to high school, only to turn them away when they reach higher education, is not only a waste of money, but also a waste of great talent and potential,” Lopez said.

---

**Local Headlines newsletter**

[Sign up](#)

Daily headlines about the Washington region.

---

Del. James Massie, R-Richmond, opposed Lopez’s bill. He said the panel should wait for the federal government’s decision on DACA.

“They are already getting the in-state tuition, so I think my position is that we ought to wait and see what the federal government does,” Massie said. “Let’s wait and see what they do, and in a year we can take another look at it.”

Jacky Cortes Nava, a DACA student attending the University of Virginia, said living in fear of losing her in-state tuition has affected her studies and emotional well-being.

“It’s not fair that we have to get distracted almost every single day from our studies,” she said. “It’s not good for our emotional or mental health that we have to wake up every day, fearing that the next day we’re not going to be able to continue with our studies.”

Copyright 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

**The Post Recommends**

## The African, Hindu and Roman goddesses who inspired Beyoncé’s stunning Grammy performance

As in Lemonade and her pregnancy announcement photos released earlier this month, the singer's Grammy performance was packed with artistic nods to African, Hindu and Roman goddesses that signify the womanhood Beyoncé has been reflecting in her most recent work.

## 188,000 evacuated, emergency declared as California’s massive Oroville Dam threatens floods

The situation had stabilized early Monday morning but officials worried about rain predicted later in the week.

**Opinion**

## Trump’s emotional tailspin was predictable

He's already wilting under the pressure.

**PAID PROMOTED STORIES**

Recommended by