

**To: The Board of Regents of the State of Georgia**  
**From: University System of Georgia Students**  
**Re: Residency Verification Committee Policies and Undocumented Students**

We, the students of the University System of Georgia, along with many supporters, stand vehemently opposed to policies passed on September 21, 2010 by the "Special Residency Verification Committee." We ask that the full Board of Regents **vote AGAINST the new residency verification system targeting undocumented students and the new policy preventing undocumented students from attending some Georgia institutions.**

These policies would prevent undocumented students from participating in our higher education system by denying admission to qualified individuals; furthermore, it could criminalize youth who would be forced to swear to their immigration status, of which they may not even be fully aware. We believe that all people are born with inalienable rights: not only to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, but also to access to education. **We believe that all of society benefits when its residents have the highest education possible.**

It has been suggested that undocumented students take seats from students who reside in this country legally and, therefore, possess a higher right to these seats. This is a falsehood, as only one college in the University System of Georgia, specifically, the University of Georgia, could potentially have this occur, and even then on such a minute scale that it certainly doesn't justify this drastic policy.

Supporters of these proposed policies may believe that they are necessary in order to protect the taxpayers of the state; however, taxpayers in the state of Georgia do not pay for the education of undocumented immigrants. In fact, undocumented students must pay out-of-state tuition and are not eligible for any kind of federal financial aid. **Because undocumented immigrants do pay out-of-state tuition, institutions actually make a profit on their enrollment.** But it's not only the financial situation that must be considered; this is also a humanitarian issue of grave importance for the University System of Georgia.

Finally, we urge you to consider your **moral center**. Students in these situations rarely even know that they are in the country illegally until they reach the age appropriate for college. They have struggled to learn our language, customs, traditions, and many of them would not even recognize their native country; they consider America their home. They are some of the best and brightest we have, and all they seek is an education. **Why would you, who are charged with "creating a more educated Georgia," put any barriers in their way?**

As stated by our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, "Upon the subject of education...I can only state that I view it as the most important subject which we as a people may engage in." Let us follow this example on the 13th of October and actively say "no" to denying the already underprivileged the right to an education, for which they are willing to pay! Let us say "no" to fear and xenophobia. Let us collectively as a people say "no" to counterproductive policies that not only serve to separate us as a people, but also bury us in an avalanche of state-manufactured poverty and hopelessness. Let's rise above that!

We, the undersigned, agree in full with the above statement and pledge our names in full support of this cause.