



FEDERATION FOR AMERICAN IMMIGRATION REFORM

Baseline Cost of HB851 to Florida Taxpayers is \$21.7 Million per Year; SB 1400 to cost \$22.7

On March 20, 2014, the Florida House passed [HB 851](#). Under this bill, illegal aliens who have attended high school in Florida consecutively for 4 years will be eligible for resident in-state tuition rates at Florida public colleges and universities. Illegal alien students seeking in-state tuition rates must apply to a Florida public college or university within two years of graduation and need only submit a Florida high school transcript for documentary evidence of eligibility. This legislation is currently pending in the state Senate.

Not surprisingly, the bill's supporters have not discussed how this legislation would displace native-born and legal residents of Florida who wish to enroll in state schools; nor has there been any attempt to quantify the number of illegal aliens who would take advantage of this law, and the associated costs to Florida taxpayers.

Detailed data on the number of illegal aliens residing in Florida, and their use of public services, are not readily available, for understandable reasons. Those who are in the state illegally are often reluctant to offer that information when enrolling in school or other state programs. However, there has been considerable work done, including by FAIR, to ascertain the impact that illegal immigration is having on U.S. states. Based on earlier FAIR cost estimates, and the best available data, we project that if HB 851 is passed, it will cost Florida taxpayers \$21.7 million in the first year, with this cost expected to rise in subsequent years as more illegal aliens take advantage of the law's provisions.

New Enrollees Who Will Qualify for Reduced Tuition Rates Under HB 851			
Type of Post-Secondary Tuition	Illegal Alien Enrollment	In-State/Out-of State Tuition Difference	Taxpayer Cost
University	616	\$15,279	\$9,411,864
Community/Associate	2,205	\$2,475	\$5,457,375
Career Centers	2,205	\$1,031	\$2,273,355
			Total Cost:
			\$17,142,594

Current Enrollees Who Will Qualify for Reduced Tuition Rates Under HB 851			
Type of Post-Secondary Tuition	Illegal Alien Enrollment	In-State/Out-of State Tuition Difference	Taxpayer Cost
University	210	\$15,279	\$3,208,590
Community/Associate	376	\$2,475	\$930,600
Career Centers	376	\$1,031	\$387,656
			Total Cost:
			\$4,526,846

We estimate that 8,785 illegal aliens graduate from Florida public high schools each year, and that 560 of those graduates go on to attend four-year public universities in the state. We project that 616 illegal aliens will enroll in Florida public universities in the academic year following the passage of HB 851, due to the added incentive of in-state tuition rates. The average difference between in- and out-of-state tuition at Florida public universities for 2013-2014 is \$15,279.¹ If HB 851 becomes law, illegal aliens who enroll in state universities will receive a taxpayer-funded subsidy of \$9,411,864. In addition, we estimate that there are 840 illegal alien students currently enrolled in Florida universities, and that one-quarter of them will qualify as in-state residents under the law. This will cost Florida taxpayers an additional \$3,208,590.

HB 851 also allows qualified illegal aliens to enroll in Florida community colleges and associate degree programs as in-state residents. We estimate that 2,205 will enroll in Florida community colleges in the 2014-2015 academic year, taking advantage of reduced tuition rates. The average difference per credit hour between in-state and out-of-state students enrolled in community colleges programs in Florida is \$275 per credit hour.² We base our estimate on an average of nine credit hours per student over the academic year, which would total a discount of \$2,475. Accordingly, the cost to Florida taxpayers will be \$5,457,375. We also estimate that 376 current students enrolled in community colleges will benefit from HB851, at a cost to taxpayers of \$930,600.

HB851 also would grant in-state tuition to qualified students who enroll in public non-charter or charter career centers, which are operated by local school districts or the Florida College System. For Florida residents, the average tuition and required fees in public non-charter schools is \$3,124.³ Based on available data, the out-of-state tuition and fee rate for these career centers is estimated to be one-third higher for out-of state enrollees. This would be \$4,155. We estimate that the number of illegal aliens who would enroll in non-charter career centers to take advantage of in-state residency rates would be 2,205 and would cost Florida taxpayer's \$2,273,355. We also estimate that 376 current enrollees would qualify for reduced in-state rates, at a cost of \$387,656. Due to insufficient data and the likelihood that the increased costs incurred would be negligible, charter career centers were excluded from this estimate.

Purported Economic Benefit of HB851

Proponents of HB851 often argue that allowing illegal aliens in Florida to attend colleges and universities at a reduced rate will lead to economic and fiscal benefits in the long-term. In effect, what they propose is spending considerable amounts of taxpayer dollars as an "investment," with the promise of a return 20 to 30 years in the future. While the immediate costs are real, the benefits are far from assured. There may be long-term benefits, but there is no reliable evidence at this point to substantiate such claims, and some reason to doubt them.⁴ Most illegal aliens are prohibited from working in the United States, and those who have received temporary work authorization under DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) may have this status revoked at any time.

Additionally, these types of projections ignore the effects that HB851, and other legislation that encourage illegal aliens to settle in Florida, will have on the native-born and legal residents in Florida.

Florida has the second largest illegal alien population in the United States after California. State and local governments in California for many decades have enacted policies welcoming to illegal aliens, and the costs associated with illegal immigration have risen accordingly. Currently, there are about 25,000 students in the California post-secondary public education system, costing state taxpayers there approximately \$102.7 million annually.⁵ Floridians should pay close attention to the economic and fiscal problems facing California due the large number of illegal aliens residing in that state.

Those who argue that many illegal aliens who cannot afford to attend public colleges and universities in Florida presently will be able to do so under HB851 must acknowledge the costs to taxpayers, and must also acknowledge that some legal residents of Florida will lose out on benefits that they would have otherwise gained if Florida law continued to prevent illegal aliens from receiving taxpayer-funded subsidized tuition rates.

The Costs of SB 1400

Along with HB 851, there is another very similar bill, [SB 1400](#), that has been introduced in the Florida Senate and is scheduled to be brought before the judiciary committee on April 1, 2014. SB 1400 only requires three years of consecutive attendance at a Florida high school before graduation to qualify for in-state tuition rates. We used the same methodology to estimate the costs of SB 1400, and assumed that the number of illegal aliens who would qualify for reduced tuition rates under this bill would be 2.5 percent higher than under HB 851.

New Enrollees Who Will Qualify for Reduced Tuition Rates Under SB 1400			
Type of Post-Secondary Intuition	Illegal Alien Enrollment	In-State/Out-of State Tuition Difference	Taxpayer Cost
University	635	\$15,279	\$9,702,165
Community/Associate	2,270	\$2,475	\$5,618,250
Career Centers	2,270	\$1,031	\$2,340,370
			Total Cost: \$17,660,785

Current Enrollees Who Will Qualify for Reduced Tuition Rates Under SB 1400			
Type of Post-Secondary Intuition	Illegal Alien Enrollment	In-State/Out-of State Tuition Difference	Taxpayer Cost
University	238	\$15,279	\$3,636,402
Community/Associate	387	\$2,475	\$957,825
Career Centers	387	\$1,031	\$398,997
			Total Cost: \$4,993,224

Methodology

A 2009 FAIR study estimated the illegal alien population in Florida to be 950,000, and the number of illegal alien students enrolled in state public schools at 146,000.⁶ Since 2009, student enrollment in Florida public schools has remained relatively stable.⁷ The illegal alien population in Florida likely declined slightly between 2009 and 2011 due to economic factors, but indicators show that it is beginning to increase again.⁸ The Pew Hispanic Center estimated the illegal alien population in 2012 to be 950,000, the same as FAIR's 2009 estimate. We believe that the illegal alien population in Florida is likely slightly higher than that number, but we have accepted Pew's estimate of 950,000 for this analysis.

Based on the Pew Hispanic Center's demographic profile of the U.S. illegal alien population, and the demographic profile of the non-citizen population in Florida by the U.S. Census Bureau, we estimated that there are now 148,000 illegal alien students in Florida public schools. We also used the Pew and Census Bureau numbers to apportion the illegal alien student population into cohorts that would benefit from HB851.⁹ This includes students who are graduating from Florida public high schools in Spring 2014, and those who have graduated over the past two years, taking into consideration the lower graduation rate for illegal alien students.¹⁰ We estimated that 8,785 illegal aliens are graduating from Florida public schools every year, and that 85 percent of them would qualify for in-state tuition under HB851. This leaves us with 7,467 and we estimate that 7.5 percent of them, or 560, attend public universities.¹¹

We assumed that the passage of HB851 would result in a ten percent increase in qualifying illegal aliens enrolling in universities who would not otherwise have done so. Therefore, we projected that if HB851 became law, 616 new students would attend Florida public universities. We also estimated that 1,300 illegal alien students (560 x 2) would have enrolled in Florida universities during the previous two years would become eligible for in-state tuition under HB851. Factoring in a 25 percent attrition rate, we assumed that one-quarter of 840 (210) illegal alien students would still be enrolled and able to take advantage of in-state tuition rates.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 66.2 percent of 2012 U.S. high school graduates attended university or college, which included community colleges and professional schools.¹² The Florida Department of Education states that 65 percent of the graduates from state high schools begin their post-secondary education at a Florida college.¹³ Given that illegal aliens would be less likely to attend post-secondary schools, we reduced that number to 61.2 percent of the estimated 7,467 illegal aliens graduating from Florida high schools. Subtracting the 7.5 percent we assumed would attend four-year universities leaves 53.7 percent, or 4,010. We evenly apportioned this number between community colleges and career centers. We made the same assumption as above for illegal aliens enrolled in Florida universities; that HB851 would lead to a 10 percent increase in those who would apply to community college or career centers, bringing each total to 2,205.

We also applied the same methodology to the number of students already enrolled in community colleges and career centers as with university students. Assuming a 25 percent attrition rate, we estimated that one-quarter of illegal alien students already enrolled in community colleges or career centers would take advantage of in-state tuition rates available to them under HB851.

¹ Average full time, in-state tuition is \$6,155 (\$205/credit hour). Average full-time, out-of-state tuition is \$21,434 (\$714/credit hour). State University System of Florida, Board of Governors, "Tuition and Fees," <http://www.flbog.edu/about/budget/current.php>, Excel Spreadsheet, "2013 - 2014 Fees," accessed March 28, 2014.

² See: The Florida College System, 2013 Annual Report (<http://www.fldoe.org/fcs/pdf/annualreport2013.pdf>). Estimate based on average difference between in-state and out-of-state rates as reported by member colleges. For example, see: "How much does TCC cost?," Tallahassee Community College, <https://www.tcc.fl.edu/Current/Cashiers/Pages/How-much-does-TCC-cost.aspx>, accessed March 28, 2014.

³ The Florida College System, "The Florida College System Transparency, Accountability, Progress, and Performance: What does it cost to attend a Florida College System credit program and how does that compare with other college options?," www.fldoe.org/fcs/pdf/FY13FCSTuitionFeesTAPPEExpanded.pdf, accessed March 28, 2014; Florida Department of Education, "A Comparison of State of Florida Charter Technical Career Centers to District Non-Charter Career Centers, 2012-13," www.fldoe.org/workforce/pdf/CharterReview13.pdf, accessed March 28, 2014.

⁴ States that offer in-state tuition to illegal aliens have not been able to demonstrate measurable positive economic or fiscal effects as a result. A March 24, 2014 article in the *Los Angeles Times* detailed the struggles that so-called "Dreamers," illegal aliens given a reprieve from deportation and the chance to go to state universities at a reduced rate, are still facing in California. Lalita Clozel, "Harsh immigration realities set in for many 'dreamers'," *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 2014, www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-immigration-dreamers-20140325.0,7318302.story.

⁵ From an upcoming FAIR publication, "The Burden of Illegal Immigration on Californians" (2014).

⁶ Jack Martin, "The Cost of Illegal Immigration to Floridians," FAIR Horizon Press, April 2009, p. 5 (http://fair.thinkrootshq.com/docs/fla_study.pdf).

⁷ "Florida Public Schools Full-Time Equivalent," Florida Department of Education, Excel Spreadsheet, "Forecast 2013-14 Projected FTE (April 15, 2013 – Recalibrated)," <http://www.fldoe.org/fefp/fte1.asp>, accessed March 28, 2014.

⁸ Jeffrey S. Passel, D'Vera Cohn, and Ana Gonzalez-Barrera, "Population Decline of Unauthorized Immigrants Stalls, May Have Reversed," Pew Research Center, September 23, 2013 (<http://www.pewhispanic.org/2013/09/23/population-decline-of-unauthorized-immigrants-stalls-may-have-reversed/>). DHS revised its estimate of the illegal alien population upwards after the 2010 Census. See: "Michael Hoefer, Nancy Rytina, and Bryan Baker, "Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2011," Department of Homeland Security, March 2012 (<http://search.dhs.gov/search?query=estimate+of+undocumented+population&op=Search&affiliate=dhs>). Bureau of Labor Statistics data collected from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey demonstrates that foreign-born workers with only a high-school diploma or less are being hired at a much higher rate than their native-born counterparts. This is another indicator of an increasing illegal alien population. See: <http://www.bls.gov/cps/>.

⁹ Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, "A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States," Pew Hispanic Center, April 14, 2009, p.4 (<http://www.pewhispanic.org/2009/04/14/a-portrait-of-unauthorized-immigrants-in-the-united-states/>); Yesenia D. Acosta, Luke J. Larsen, and Elizabeth M. Grieco, "Non-citizens Under Age 35: 2010-2012," U.S. Census Bureau, February 2014 (<http://www.census.gov/prod/2014pubs/acsbr12-06.pdf>). Illegal Aliens represent about 26% of Florida's foreign-born population.

¹⁰ The 2012-2013 graduation rate for all high school students is 75.6%. For Hispanics the graduation rate was 74.9%. We assumed a graduation rate for illegal aliens of 70%. Florida high schools have seen a marked increase in graduation rates, both before and after new federal guidelines for measuring graduation

were required in 2010-2011. Various types of earned degrees count toward the graduation rate. Here is how the Florida Department of Education describes how it measures its graduation rate: “Florida’s graduation rate is 75.6 percent, but that does not mean that 24.4 percent of students in the cohort are dropouts. In a cohort students can be classified as graduates, dropouts and non-graduates. Non-graduates include students who have been retained and are still in school, received certificates of completion or received GED-based diplomas. In Florida’s 2012-13 cohort, 4.6 percent of the students dropped out and 19.8 percent were retained or earned a certificate of completion, special diploma or GED-based diploma.” See: “Florida’s High School Cohort Graduation Rates and Single-year Dropout Rates, 2012-13,” Florida Department of Education, Series 2014-06D, November 2013, www.fldoe.org/eias/eiaspubs/word/FedGradRate_1213.doc.

¹¹ The percentage of illegal aliens who attend or who might attend public universities is difficult to gauge. Universities, which collect enormous amounts of information about their students, should be required to determine how many of its students are illegal aliens. We estimated that 7.5% of illegal aliens who graduate from Florida high school attend a university in that state. See, Roberto G. Gonzales, “Young Lives on Hold: The College Dreams of Undocumented Students,” Collage Board Advocacy, April 2009, p. 2; Jeffrey S. Passel, “Further Demographic Information Relating to the DREAM Act,” The Urban Institute, October 21, 2003.

¹² “College Enrollment and Work Activity of 2012 High School Graduates,” Economic News Release, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/hsgec.nr0.htm>, accessed March 28, 2014.

¹³ “About Us,” Florida Department of Education, <http://www.fldoe.org/fcs/>, accessed March 28, 2014.