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## **A Sensible Path in California**

**Gov. Jerry Brown of California took a stand for immigrants' rights and humane, sensible government when he signed several new bills into law. It is a welcome change from the intolerance and counterproductive policies being adopted in so many other states around the country.**

**The most significant legislation was the California Dream Act, which will help lift barriers to college for thousands of undocumented students. The first part of the two-bill package allows students to apply for private scholarships and loans; the second makes them eligible to seek state-financed aid. Mr. Brown has fulfilled a campaign promise to extend opportunity to talented young Californians who are blameless for their immigration status.**

**The law, blasted by shortsighted critics as a waste of money, is an investment in California's future and a powerful defense of assimilation, education and the rights of children. It stands in sharp contrast to radical laws in Arizona and Alabama, which use police-state powers to choke off all opportunity for unauthorized immigrants and force them into hidden, impoverished lives.**

**Four other laws defend immigrants in other ways. One prohibits city and county governments from enacting laws forcing employers to use E-Verify, the error-prone federal hiring database, to check workers' immigration status. Another requires public schools to accept a broad range of proof-of-residency documents when enrolling students to ensure compliance with Plyler v. Doe, the Supreme**

Court decision that guaranteed all children a public education regardless of immigration status.

The other laws restrict the ability of law enforcement to seize the vehicles of drivers whose only violation is lack of a license, and allow undocumented student-government leaders at the California State University and state community colleges to qualify for the same stipends and scholarships other student leaders receive.

With these new laws, California is telling immigrants not to stay hidden but to get educated and keep working hard. They are no substitute for federal reform — an unauthorized young person with a college degree is still unauthorized. They are a road map to restoring the connection between immigrants' dreams and American opportunities. For that, California deserves admiration.



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