



**OCA-GREATER LOS ANGELES**

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Greater Los Angeles *EMBRACING THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OF ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS*

March 29, 2017

Honorable Patrick O'Donnell  
Chair, California State Assembly Education Committee  
State Capitol  
Room 2196  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0070

***RE: SUPPORT FOR AB 699 (O'DONNELL) - SAFE SCHOOLS FOR IMMIGRANT STUDENTS***

Dear Assemblymember O'Donnell:

OCA-Greater Los Angeles (OCA-GLA) is in strong support of AB 699 (O'Donnell). We thank you for authoring this important piece of legislation, which ensures that all K-12 students have safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environments regardless of immigration status or religious beliefs. AB 699 upholds the fundamental constitutional right of a public education for *all* California students.

OCA-GLA is the Southern California Chapter for National OCA. We are a network of chapters dedicated to advocating civil rights, civic engagement and community mobilization of the Asian-Pacific Islander American Community.

With the issuance of xenophobic and draconian Executive Orders by President Donald Trump targeting undocumented immigrants, there is a heightened level of fear among students and their families of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids and other forms of federal immigration enforcement -- including at school sites. In Los Angeles just a few weeks ago, a father was detained by ICE after he had dropped off his daughter at school. Moreover, in a mere three days after the November 2016 election, the Southern Poverty Law Center identified over 200 incidents of harassment and intimidation across the country, with K-12 schools cited as the most common locations where these incidents occurred.

All students -- including immigrant students -- should be able to learn in safe and equitable learning environments. The United States Supreme Court held in *Plyer v. Doe* (1982) that no public school district has a basis to deny children access to education based on their immigration status. It is also the policy of the State of California to provide all students with equal rights and opportunities to an education.

AB 699 is important legislation that would provide critical protections and supports for immigrant students, including: prohibiting the collection of information regarding the immigration status of pupils or their family members; refusing school site access to ICE agents for any purpose unless there is a judicial warrant or court order; requiring schools to comply with parental instructions relating to their children's care; providing counseling services to students affected by immigration enforcement, detention, and deportations; offering



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information to parents and guardians about their children’s right to a free public education, regardless of immigration status or religious beliefs; and educating students about the negative impact of bullying based on actual or perceived immigration status or religious beliefs.

It is more imperative now than ever to invest in California’s future by protecting the right of all students to learn without fear in schools that are safe and welcoming. On behalf of OCA-GLA, for all the reasons stated above, we urge state legislators to promote equal educational opportunity for students regardless of immigration status and religious beliefs by voting in support of AB 699.

Sincerely yours,

Janet Ly  
Board President  
OCA-Greater Los Angeles