

Brown OKS college aid for undocumented immigrants in state

By David Siders, Sacramento Bee

Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation Saturday allowing undocumented immigrant college students access to public financial aid, marking California's relatively liberal ground in a bitter row over immigration nationwide.

The California Dream Act allows undocumented students who came to the country before age 16 and attended California high schools access to public financial aid, including Cal Grants. Those students already are eligible for in-state tuition, and Brown in July signed a companion measure affording them access to private financial aid.

"Going to college is a dream that promises intellectual excitement and creative thinking," Brown said in a prepared statement. "The Dream Act benefits us all by giving top students a chance to improve their lives and the lives of all of us."

Brown, a Democrat, supported the act during last year's gubernatorial campaign, and his signature was all but certain. He had negotiated amendments to the bill, Assembly Bill 131, to reduce costs, excluding graduates of technical and adult schools and delaying implementation until January 2013.

But anticipation was high, and news spread among students and young people via Twitter and text message within minutes of Brown's announcement.

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