



IDRA Public Comments to the Texas House Higher Education Committee, Submitted August 18, 2026

Postsecondary Education Affordability: Study strategies to improve postsecondary education affordability for Texas students and reduce financial barriers to enrollment, persistence, and completion. Evaluate whether state financial aid investments are effectively targeted and structured to promote student success and meet workforce needs. Review the impact of recent federal legislation on student aid and institutional affordability. Analyze unmet financial need among eligible students and make recommendations to ensure state investments deliver measurable returns for students, employers, and taxpayers.

Chairman Wilson and Members,

Since the legislature adjourned sine die in 2025, the U.S. Department of Justice and Texas Attorney General worked to end a longstanding, bipartisan policy that benefited all Texans: the *Texas Dream Act*. The *Texas Dream Act* made postsecondary education affordable for thousands of Texas high school students who have lived and learned in Texas for most of their young lives by allowing graduating students who met other criteria to be eligible for in-state tuition rates at public colleges and universities.

After the court's consent decree in June of 2025, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board adopted rules to nullify the *Texas Dream Act*, though it still sits on the books in Texas law. The new agency rules tasked each public college or university with determining the "lawful presence" of applicants and students for tuition and state aid, though no standard for "lawful presence" was adopted.

This means that many students lost their financial aid packages and saw their tuition rates double or triple before the 2025-26 school year began, and many others have been excluded from an affordable college education despite their Texas high school diplomas.

The legislature can fix this to ensure all Texas high school students can attend affordable postsecondary education in the state.

- The legislature can adopt changes to state tuition waivers to ensure all Texas high school graduates can apply for institutional and state aid.
- The legislature can create specific tuition waivers for students interested in key

workforce shortage areas, including but not limited to nursing, education and skilled fields.

- The legislature can ensure that institutions of higher education uphold privacy protections for all students per the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) and prohibit institutions from sharing student information with USCIS.

Thank you for your consideration in making sure every Texas graduate can access an affordable postsecondary education.

Resources

Duggins-Clay, P., & White, C. (June-July 2026). Collusive Litigation Strategy Dismantles Texas Dream Act & Creates Roadmap for Other Policies. IDRA Newsletter. <https://idra.news/nlj26c>
IDRA. (December 23, 2025). What New Rules Mean for Vouchers and the Texas Dream Act. IDRA Texas Education Action Alert. <https://idra.news/TxEdAAAlert122325>