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March 30, 2017

By electronic mail

The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell
Chair, Assembly Education Committee
1020 N Street, Room 159
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 699 (O'Donnell) – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member O'Donnell:

Public Advocates supports AB 699 (O'Donnell), your proposal to prohibit public schools from discriminating on the basis of immigration status, ensuring that all students receive equal educational opportunities.


Public Advocates is a civil rights legal organization that has served as a key voice for educational equity in landmark cases such as *Serrano v. Priest* and *Williams v. California*. We work to reverse inequities and ensuring meaningful access to opportunity for students most affected by systemic injustices. Our commitment to “making rights real” has shaped our vision of building an educational system that prepares all students for college and career readiness, regardless of socioeconomic status race, place of residency, language, or immigration status.

In *Plyer v. Doe*, the Supreme Court ruled that all public schools have the obligation to provide children access to education, without taking into consideration immigration status. Yet, with President Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric, there is a heightened level of fear among many of California's students, as Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids are becoming increasingly common near schools. It is more critical than ever that California protect its immigrant student population.

In addition to prohibiting schools from using immigration status to discriminate against students, AB 699 would also prevent ICE agents from entering school grounds without a warrant and require counseling services to students affected by immigration enforcement, detention, and deportations. Without these necessary protections, the learning opportunities of many of our state's students will be threatened.

For these reasons, we support AB 669. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Liz Guillen".

Liz Guillen
Director of Legislative & Community Affairs
(916) 803-5596 – cell

Cc: Assembly Education Committee