

POSITION STATEMENT

IN SUPPORT OF

SENATOR CYNTHIA NAVA'S BILL TO ENSURE IMMIGRANT ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN NEW MEXICO

DECEMBER 2004

The New Mexico Human Rights Coalition supports Senator Cynthia Nava's proposed bill which prohibits denial of admission to a public post-secondary educational institution on account of immigration status; and would make benefits available, to such students who have attended high school in New Mexico for at least one year and have graduated from a New Mexico high school or received a GED in New Mexico.

Many immigrant students who graduate from New Mexico high schools, but who do not have social security numbers or foreign student visas, are significantly restricted in pursuing a college education because they are charged out-of-state tuition and have no access to financial aid. In most cases, these students have lived in New Mexico since early childhood and have succeeded, despite the odds, in our K-12 educational system. It is time they have the opportunity to fulfill their potential, realize their educational goals, and fully contribute to the civic and economic life of this state.

The Coalition believes that immigrant students should not be deprived of their civil rights to a higher education. The Coalition believes also that Senator Nava's bill would that immigrant students, regardless of immigration status, have access to in-state tuition, financial aid, and scholarships, greatly improving their chances of achieving a college education and urges its enactment during the 2005 Session of the New Mexico State Legislature.