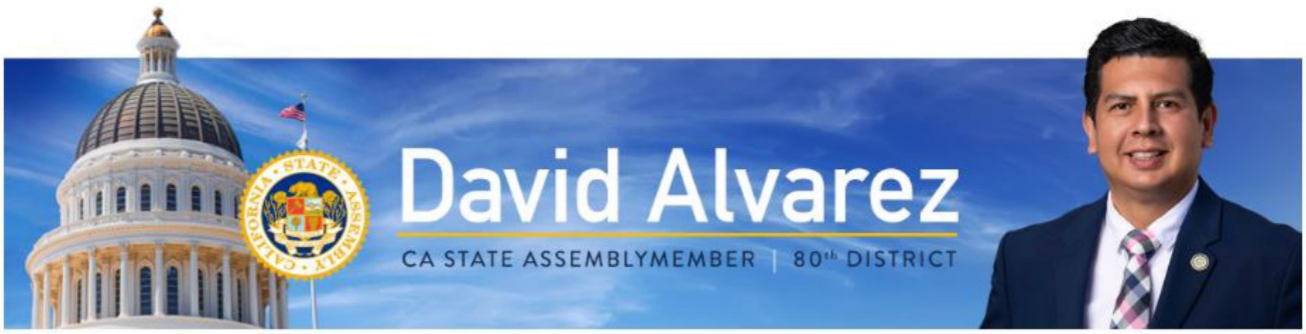


AB-91 (Alvarez) Resident Tuition for Low-Income Students in Border Region

Bill Summary

AB-91 will establish a 5-year pilot program to allow low-income students who live in Mexico, in the California-Mexico border region, to be eligible for in-state tuition rates at a San Diego and Imperial Counties Community College Association (SDICCCA) member college, located in California.

Existing Law

Under existing law, all students who have residency outside of California are required to pay non-resident tuition rates at CA colleges. Average cost of resident tuition at CA community college is approx. $1,256 / year versus $6,603 / year for non-residents. Exemptions do exist, such as SB-605 (Gaines, 2015) which allows residents in certain communities in Nevada to enroll at Lake Tahoe Community College at a reduced tuition rate. The University of Texas - El Paso (UTEP) established a similar program in 1987 and has since educated over 73,000 students in Mexico, and similar cross-border exemption programs are currently being operated in both New Mexico and Arizona.

Background

According to the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, San Diego must double the number of people with post-secondary education by 2030 to meet the demands of its local economy. That equates to approximately 20,000 new skilled workers each year.

Southern California and Baja-California (MX) operates as one region where living in one country while going to school or working on the other side has been a part of everyday life for decades. San Diego County has a robust $250 billion to $300 billion annual economy, but the region is facing the staffing shortages.

Creating additional avenues for education to people living in Tijuana and other border regions in Mexico would increase the available workforce in San Diego and Imperial County.

Texas, New Mexico and Arizona have long recognized the economic benefits of facilitating cross-border education, and it is time California does too.

Details of the Bill

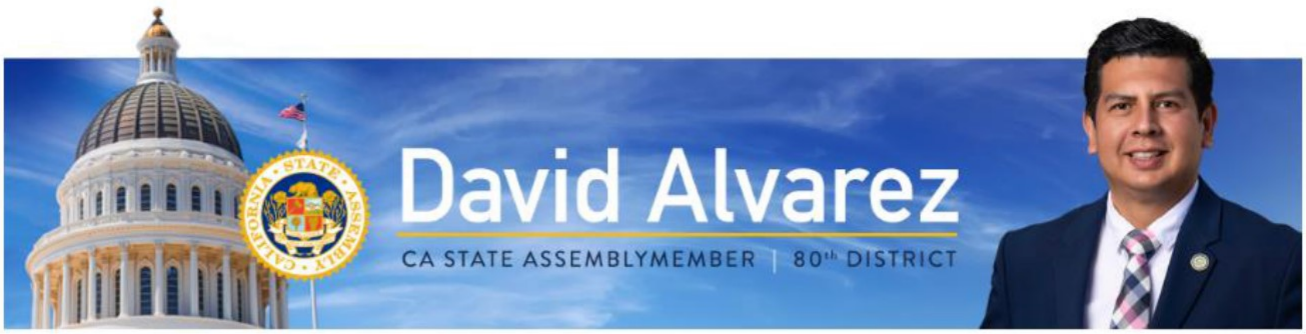
AB-91 will allow low-income students who reside in Mexico, near the California-Mexico border, to be eligible for in-state tuition rates at community colleges, who are a member of SDICCCA. This includes:

- Cuyamaca College, Grossmont College, Imperial Valley College, Miracosta College, Miramar College, San Diego City College, San Diego Continuing Education, San Diego Mesa College, Palomar College and Southwestern College.

To be eligible for this pilot program, a student must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be a non-resident, and have residence within 45-miles from the California-Mexico border for at least 1-year prior to enrollment.
- Be designated low-income (using US federal poverty definition)
- Enroll in lower-division courses at a SDICCCA member college.

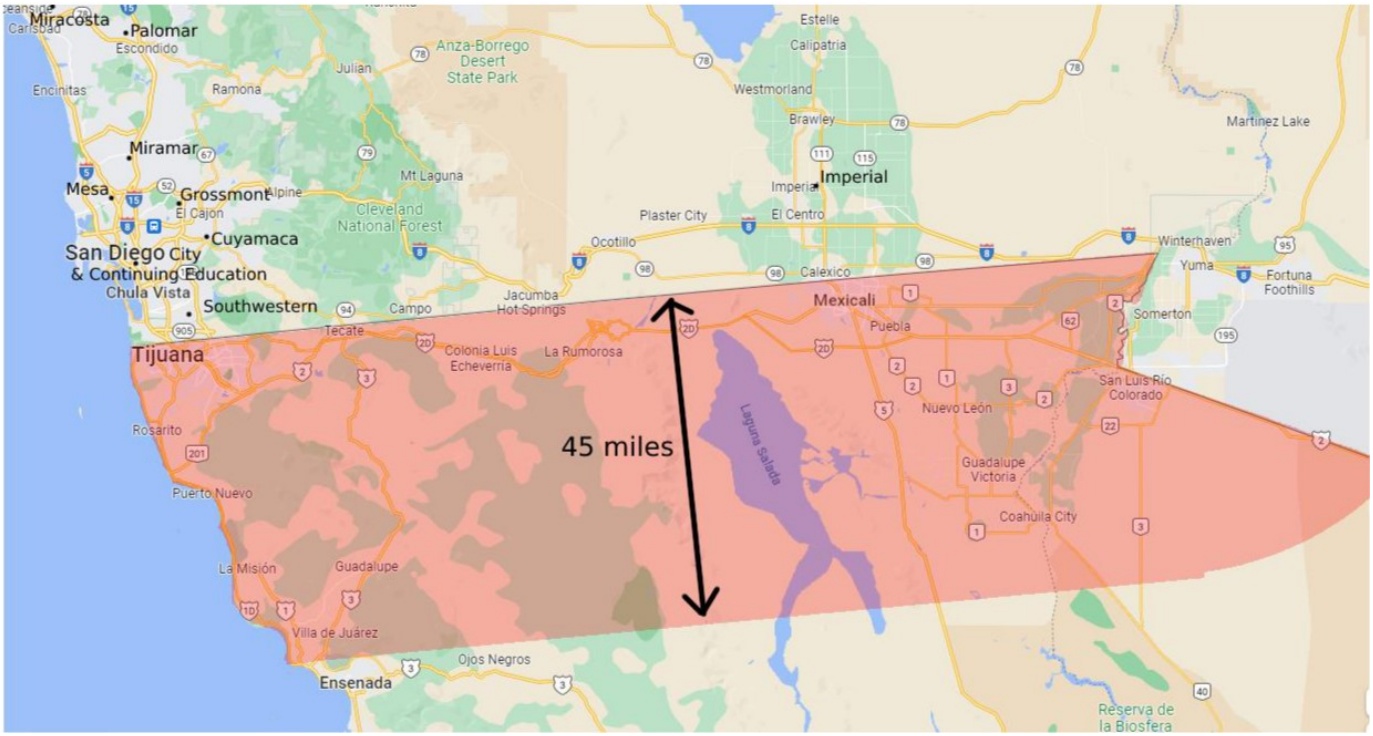
Each college can exempt no more than 150 Full Time Equivalent Students (FTES) and the bill includes a sunset date of July 1, 2028.



Support

- All 10 SDICCCA Member Colleges and District
- San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce
- California Federation of Teachers
- San Diego County Supervisor Nora Vargas
- Chula Vista Deputy Mayor Jose Preciado
- San Diego Council President Elo-Rivera
- San Diego Councilmember Vivian Moreno
- Baja California Governor Pilar Avila Olmeda (MX)
- Chicano Federation
- Community Health Group of San Diego.
- Energy Communications Corporation

Border Region & SDICCCA Overview



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Media

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