Advancing Justice - Atlanta applauds Fulton County Judge’s Decision to Grant In-State Tuition for DACA Recipients

NORCROSS, GA, January 3, 2017 — In a ruling, handed down on Friday, December 30th, 2016, Fulton County Judge Gail S. Tusun granted in-state tuition eligibility for DACA recipients in Georgia. Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta (“Advancing Justice - Atlanta”) applauds Judge Tusun’s ruling and celebrates the fact that over 18,000 DACA recipients in Georgia now have access to in-state tuition at most of the state’s public colleges and universities.

DACA stands for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, a program that grants lawful presence, a valid work permit, and, in Georgia, a driver’s license to young people who immigrated to the United States, meet certain qualifications, and, for some reason, have lost their immigration status.

Prior to this ruling, the Georgia Board of Regents enforced a policy that barred undocumented students, including those with the DACA designation, from in-state tuition eligibility, requiring them to pay 3 to 4 times greater tuition rates than their peers. Additionally, because of Regents policy 4.1.6., undocumented students were, and continue to be, barred from the state’s most competitive schools, which now includes UGA, Georgia Tech, and Georgia College and State University. These policies greatly restricted, and in the case of Policy 4.1.6., continue to restrict access to higher education for members of our community.

In our state, there are over 51,000 undocumented youth; of which, over 14% are Asian American. Immigrant rights and access to education are two of our primary policy concerns.

“Our organization remains committed to defending the rights of our community members, including those without legal status in the United States. This ruling is huge, but there is still work to be done. We are gearing up for a legislative fight in which all of our strength and resolves will be tested. Certain legislators, have suggested introducing legislation to clarify that those living without legal status in Georgia would not be eligible for in-state tuition,” says Stephanie Cho, Executive Director.

Additionally, Advancing Justice - Atlanta remains cautious as the fate of the DACA program currently rests with the incoming Trump administration. We are hopeful that, until there is a comprehensive solution to our broken immigration system, DACA will continue to protect our communities from deportation.

Those who encounter issues with the enforcement of this ruling or those with additional questions are encouraged to contact us for more information.

For more information about Asian Americans Advancing Justice, call 404-585-8446 or email info@advancingjustice-atlanta.org.

About Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta (formerly Asian American Legal Advocacy Center or AALAC) is the first non-profit law center dedicated to Asian immigrants and refugees (“Asian Americans”) in the Southeast.

Our goal is to engage, educate and empower under-represented Asian Americans to greater civic participation.
We are one of five independent organizations that make up the national Asian Americans Advancing Justice. Together with our affiliates in Chicago, DC, Los Angeles and San Francisco, we bring more than 100 years of collective experience in addressing the civil rights issues faced by Asian Americans and other vulnerable and underserved communities. Visit www.advancingjustice-atlanta.org.