

House Bill 932



Refugees from around the world have made valuable economic, social, and cultural contributions to the state of Georgia for decades. These refugees, parolees and SIV holders are a valuable resource to Georgia's economy. However, this resource has been left largely untouched due to the financial barriers associated with higher education without the extension of in-state tuition. As Georgia continues a proud history of successful refugee resettlement, and is poised to welcome 1,700 Afghan allies, the potential for economic benefit cannot be abandoned as talented individuals are forced to work below their skill level without the opportunity or financial ability to enroll in higher education institutions upon arrival.

What Does HB 932 Do?

HB 932 would amend OCGA 20-3-66 to allow for refugees and special immigrant visa (SIV) holders who helped the US military overseas to be classified as in-state students upon arrival. HB 932 would allow for college ready parolees, SIV holders and refugees to access higher education without the barrier of the existing one year waiting period to establish residency.

How Does HB 932 Benefit Georgia?

- **For these students, Georgia is the only state they have ever called home.** After they are selected by the U.S. to resettle in a particular state, they typically wait 18 months to 3 years in refugee camps before being relocated, making the current 1 year waiting period to establish residency a redundant barrier to these Georgians.
- **The University System of Georgia is reporting declining enrollment numbers.** USG reports declining enrollment at 21 out of 26 schools, coinciding with total credit enrollment at technical colleges declining by 8.5%. The passage of HB 932 would allow for talented and dedicated students to enroll, without prohibitive financial burden, as an answer to a struggling system of higher education.
- **HB 932 is a key tool to building Georgia's workforce and helping the state to maximize its global talent.** Approximately 40% of Georgia refugees have already attended high school or some college. Allowing these motivated students to restart their education without delay is smart business as 60% of Georgia's jobs of the future need post-secondary certification or degrees and the state faces significant labor shortages in skilled fields.
- **There is no expected negative fiscal impact associated with the passage of HB 932.** The proposed beneficiaries of the extension of in-state tuition proposed by HB 932 would not be able to reasonably pay out of state tuition. Therefore, the extension of in-state tuition proposed in HB 932 represents no real loss of revenue.

