**Newsom signs bill allowing schools to hire undocumented students**

On Monday California became the first state in the nation to allow employment of undocumented college students without legal work permits, when Assembly Bill 2685 was signed into law by Gov. Gavin Newsom.

The landmark legislation passed the Legislature in a final 28-20 Assembly vote last week. It directs all California public and private colleges and universities to employ students who, due to their legal status, often struggle to secure paid on-campus jobs, internships and research opportunities. These institutions would have to begin hiring students by January 2026.

“California is leading on an issue that, unfortunately, the rest of the country is failing,” Assemblyman David Alvarez, D-San Diego, said on Monday following the bill’s signing.

“America has always promised that if you work hard, you will have the opportunity to succeed,” he said. “These students have fulfilled their obligation and are ready to be our future teachers, scientists, doctors and public servants. This bill will provide them with the opportunity to work.”

Alvarez introduced the bill last year after California State University leaders scrapped a plan to hire these undocumented students. CSU leaders had cited legal concerns including loss of federal funding and the exposure of undocumented students and their families to prosecution and deportation.

The legislation is built on a legal theory that asserts that a federal ban on hiring undocumented people does not apply to states because they are not specifically mentioned as employers subject to sanctions in the 1988 Immigration Reform and Control Act, signed by President George H.W. Bush. Before that law, the legal analysis notes, the U.S. Supreme Court established that Congress must use “unmistakably clear” language if it wants to regulate state governments.

Some believe the new California law will not stand up to federal scrutiny, particularly if Donald Trump is re-elected president in November.

“Do we really want to rattle the hornet’s nest?” if Trump wins, asked CSU Regent José Hernández. Although he wants the CSU system to find a way to hire the undocumented students, he said, “you have to look at the political landscape.”

Trump’s running mate, Sen. J.D. Vance of Indiana, introduced a bill in April cutting off federal funding to universities that hire undocumented people.

“Left-wing college administrators want to transform their campuses into sanctuary cities,” Vance said in announcing the bill with Sen. Jim Banks (R-Ohio.), which is pending in a Senate committee. “Our legislation would put this madness to an end. We cannot let American tax dollars fund illegal wages.”

Alvarez maintains the new law would simply give young students who have grown up in America a chance at a better life.

“Young people, who all they know is their American life, should be integrated into our society,” Alvarez said on Monday. “That’s what this bill intends to do — recognize that they are students. They’ve worked hard, they’ve committed themselves and they’re now prepared to work for us.”