



Immigrants face hurdles to higher ed and independence: letter to the editor

[Other Voices](#) By [Other Voices](#)

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Sunday's article about Senior Standout Chaza Banda raised an important issue facing our immigrant youth (["Immigration status creates huge barrier to college"](#)). The Ohio Board of Regents' current policy making students like Ms. Banda ineligible for in-state tuition extends to many other immigrants, including U visa holders. A U visa is for an immigrant who has been the victim of a serious crime (e.g. domestic violence) in the United States, who has assisted in the investigation or prosecution of the crime.

A U visa recipient and certain qualifying family members receive a work permit and after three years may apply for a green card. Despite being on a path to citizenship and paying taxes, U visa holders are currently not eligible for in-state tuition in Ohio. Many of my U visa clients defer college because the out-of-state tuition is too big an obstacle. Others are accepted to four-year colleges but attend community college instead, because of cost.

Studies on domestic violence show that financial independence from the abuser is the single most important factor in the victim's ability to leave the relationship and avoid future abusive relationships. Access to higher education is the only way to achieve long-term financial independence and economic security.

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