

Tais Chicaiza

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Bill De Blasio

Gracie Mansion

East End Ave. at 88th St., Manhattan, NY

My name is Tais Chicaiza, and I'm a college student at New York City College of Technology. Currently I'm in my second semester, and I'd like to discuss a problem that has been affecting me and several of my close friends. discussing these problems is something that people don't talk about nowadays , yet this directly touches me deeply, not only for myself but also for many of my fellow immigrants .

Since the start of the twentieth century, America has attracted people all over the world to relocate and start a new life. For many, coming to America was a chance for a better life and new opportunities. They all had something in common, they all had a dream, that dream was the "American Dream". In the present day the desire to achieve that dream hasn't changed. However, the idea of the American Dream brings up a lot of questions.

Mayor, I want to ask you: What is the American Dream? Can it be achieved? Should everyone have a chance to achieve it? When I was in high school, this question came up in my mind on the first day of class. I asked my classmates to respond to these questions and there were so many different answers as to what would be the American Dream. Some people said having a good job, having a nice house , and making good money, while others said living in a country where we have political freedom, equal rights, educational opportunities, and there is safety for all children. All of a sudden, college has come up in the discussion. For the most part, they demonstrated their concerns about the financial issues affecting immigrants in college.

I know for sure that the situation for college students has aggravated as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, especially for immigrants with financial difficulties . I interviewed several friends from immigrant backgrounds who had reflected on these questions. This issue was brought up by someone I knew in high school. Her name is Melisa Almache . She had been living in the states for about two years. Melissa, like any other immigrant, was looking for a better life, the perfect “American Dream”. She emigrated from St. Kitts and Nevis in the Caribbean to the U.S. She became a U.S. citizen and planned to obtain a bachelor’s degree in healthcare. However, financing her education was challenging. “Because I graduated from high school outside the United States, it was difficult to complete financial aid and application forms, and pay for tuition,” Melisa said. She also included that the national salary on average is higher compared to immigrant workers. “My parents had come to this country from Mexico and Ecuador, seeking better opportunities for themselves. They worked and saved for years to ensure my two brothers and I could receive a good education and a solid financial foundation as adults.” she explained. She claimed that no one guide her to complete her fafsa application. Everything that she wished and dream for her whole life, has now become useless.

Unfortunately, the pandemic has taken away and decreased these interactions with her campus and the people in it, as well as the overall value of education, except for tuition that is. Most importantly, I do have all the information that I can prove to you, Mayor de Blasio , and I can confirm that Immigrants contribute to the host country's economic development, however, they earn less when they first arrive, and it takes many years for them to attain income stability.

According to an article from CNN, “America's immigrant: more work, less pay” by Pratick Gillespie , immigrants typically earn less than american-born workers. They have a lower unemployment rate (4.3%) than native-born U.S. citizens (4.9%) and also participate more in the economy, meaning they're either working or looking for work. Needless to say, immigration plays a major factor in this country's economy, so it doesn't seem fair that immigrants do not obtain the same opportunities. People work hard everyday to provide for their families and yet never receive the money they need to pay for their debts or have a decent life. As far as I'm concerned over the unemployment of immigrants. The most important problem is college tuition and fees. This lack of change in tuition is turning out to be problematic for many students. Due to the

pandemic, most students , including immigrants are taking online classes in this crisis , so it doesn't make sense for them to have to pay normal tuition since they aren't getting their money's worth of a full college experience. Many of them and their families are also currently facing financial hardships and aren't able to pay off their bills.

Mayor, what can we do to solve this issue? I believe that College tuition needs to be lowered. College tuition is already expensive, now add a pandemic to it and for various families, it's as if prices have actually increased. Initially, Tuition should be lowered in order to help families during the uncertain times the pandemic has created. Multiple families are currently experiencing job loss or have little to no available work. Due to this, a lot of people aren't able to fully provide for their families anymore since many are now earning significantly less than they normally would be. It can't be helped that the pandemic is having such drastic effects on the amount of income many immigrant families are receiving, yet somehow, these same families are expected to come up with money to pay off numerous bills and even the expenses of tuition. I also believe that Colleges should be able to give all students an equal chance at receiving an education. Therefore, colleges should either lower tuition or at least support their students by granting them opportunities to help them pay off their tuition. I hope you consider the concerns of all immigrants and take action on how to establish a new system in public universities and colleges.

Sincerely,

Tais Chicaiza