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**To: Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
Members**

From: David McGuire, Staff Attorney

**Written Testimony Supporting
Governor's Bill No. 6390
An Act Concerning Access to Postsecondary Education**

Good afternoon Senator Bye, Representative Willis and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. My name is David McGuire. As the Staff Attorney for the ACLU of Connecticut, I am here to support Governor's Bill No. 6390, An Act Concerning Access to Postsecondary Education.

The ACLU-CT has consistently protected the rights of immigrants by ensuring equal protection and fairness under our laws. To this end, the ACLU-CT supports this bill because it guarantees all Connecticut students, regardless of immigration status, the right to attend Connecticut institutions of higher education at an affordable rate.

Ten states¹ have enacted laws permitting all students who attended and graduated from an in-state public high school to pay the in-state tuition rate at public universities. By enacting equal education laws, these states chose not to penalize children who were brought to the U.S. at a young age by their parents. Significantly, these states have recognized that a well-educated population leads to increased earning potential and incomes that stimulate economic growth in their state economies. Equal education laws remove discriminatory economic impediments that often prevent undocumented high school graduates from pursuing higher education.

¹ California, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wisconsin.

Many undocumented students educated in Connecticut K-12 public school system come from impoverished backgrounds and are not able to attend college without in-state tuition. Denying affordable higher education access to all Connecticut students is a failure to capitalize on Connecticut's investment in their K-12 education.

In analyzing Public Act No. 07-135, the 2007 version of this bill that Governor Rell vetoed, the Office of Fiscal Analysis reported that the Connecticut State University (CSU) and the Community-Technical College Systems (CTC) would potentially gain revenue if additional students chose to attend college as a result of lower tuition rates. The report found that CSU and CTC were not at full capacity and would not be replacing out-of-state students. This bill will create revenue for Connecticut's colleges.

The ACLU-CT urges you to support Governor's Bill No. 6390, An Act Concerning Access to Postsecondary Education, because this bill is critical to achieving fundamental fairness in access to public higher education.