

Testimony of Kelly Albuquerque DaRosa
March 15, 2011

In support of H.B. 6390 An Act Concerning Access to Postsecondary Education

Good Morning Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. My name is Kelly Albuquerque DaRosa. I am in support of the In-State Tuition Bill. As a resident of West Hartford and student I would personally like to thank Beth Bye for all her support. Also Beth if you could let Dr. Wilson know Kelly Albuquerque says hello, I was a former student of hers and a Conard graduate. I am a current graduate student at the Uconn School of Social Work and a Family Service Worker for a non-profit Head Start Program. I would also like to thank every committee member present here today for the opportunity to testify.

As an American Citizen born from an immigrant Portuguese family. I have witnessed the hard work and dedication that my parents made day in and day out to provide a better life for my brother and I so that we could live the American Dream. At a young age I realized the importance of pursuing an education and was the first in my family to not only graduate high school but also to go to college. I remember applying for financial aid at the college I was attending and being denied because my parents made too much. I felt saddened because I thought to myself how can my family afford this and I don't understand how I am not eligible. My parents are not wealthy and we live paycheck to paycheck. My parents did not let that stop them from helping me. Their dream for me was to have the opportunity to an education because unfortunately they were unable to have that for themselves. I remember my father telling me " don't worry Kelly we'll make it work, I want you and your brother to further your education so that you can have a better life, I don't want you to get stuck working in a factory like I do " From the age of 16, I worker three part-time jobs and made honors every semester. I was able to complete my bachelor's degree in 2 years while working part-time in a factory. It was a struggle and I was getting charged In-State Tuition. I was faced with the same obstacle when applying for graduate school but this time around I am a single mother of an 18 month old baby, without a husband due to the immigration process. If I am struggling and I am an American citizen being charged In-State tuition, I can not imagine these children from immigrant families, who unjustly are being charged Out-of State Tuition.

These families are not asking or looking for a free ride to college for their children. Instead their asking to be treated fairly. To these children and their families the state of Connecticut is home to them. For those of us who are parents we can agree that we want the very best for our children and want to see them succeed in life. As a Family Service Worker, I remember working with an undocumented mother. I asked her how I could assist her. She shared that she and her husband were grateful that her son was receiving an education through our head start program but then she began to cry. I asked why she was crying and she stated "all I want for my son is that he gets the education I was not able to and is able to live a better life, yet I fear the day that I have to tell him he cannot go to college because he was not born here and I don't know if we will be able to afford it". I remember fighting back my tears because all I could think about is looking at

my baby girl and telling her that she could not further pursue her education. Could you bring yourselves to tell your children that? We should not judge these individuals motives for coming to the United States until we ourselves have walked in there shoes. Although these families are aware that due to their status they are being charged out of state tuition they accept this injustice because they want to allow their children the opportunity to further their education. Martin Luther King Jr describes this when he stated " One who breaks an unjust law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law. " All I ask is that you give these children an opportunity to a fair and just education by supporting the In-State Tuition Bill Our children are the future of our state and our country and they deserve a chance. Thank- you for your time and I end with another quote from Martin Luther King Jr "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'