



# CEA

Advocating for teachers  
and public education

## Connecticut Education Association

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Executive Director

### Government Relations

Vincent J. Loffredo, Director  
Capitol Place, Suite 500  
21 Oak Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-8001  
860-525-5641, 800-842-4316  
Fax: 860-725-6362  
vinniel@cea.org

Affiliated with the  
National Education  
Association

Testimony of

Ray Rossomando

Connecticut Education Association

Before the

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Re: **HB 6390 An Act Concerning Access to Postsecondary Education**

March 15, 2011

Good afternoon Senator Bye, Representative Willis, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. My name is Ray Rossomando, Legislative Coordinator for the Connecticut Education Association, representing 45,000 active and retired teachers across the state.

We testify today in strong support of *HB6390 An Act Concerning Access to Postsecondary Education*. HB6390 extends in-state tuition status to undocumented immigrants who have graduated from a high school in Connecticut after attending for four years.

We commend Governor Malloy for submitting this legislation and making it part of his biennial budget. The language in this bill was originally passed by the legislature as Public Act 07-135, only to be vetoed by Governor Rell. Connecticut should not wait any longer to have this legislation signed into law.

Connecticut's competitive advantage has long been its educated workforce. However, Connecticut has seen too many of its college-bound graduates head for distant states, many of whom ultimately settle outside of our borders. At a time when the State's need for competitive graduates is at an all time high, we should be dismantling hurdles that diminish access to our public institutions of higher education. This bill is a step in the right direction.

To date, 10 other states permit in-state tuition for graduates from high schools in their states (CA, IL, KS, NE, NM, NY, TX, UT, WA, WI). Connecticut should join them. However, it should be noted that HB6390 requires students to attend a high school in Connecticut for 4 years. No other state requires more than 3. New York, for example, requires only 2 years attendance in a New York high school. As the committee deliberates over this bill, we ask that members consider lowering the required years of in-state high school attendance consistent with the other states that have successfully enacted similar legislation.

As public school teachers, we recognize that students can be energized by their future aspirations. By providing in-state tuition to a population of students who, most often by no fault of their own, attend our schools without legal immigration status, we make such dreams and aspirations more possible. This can only lead to a better Connecticut.

Thank you.